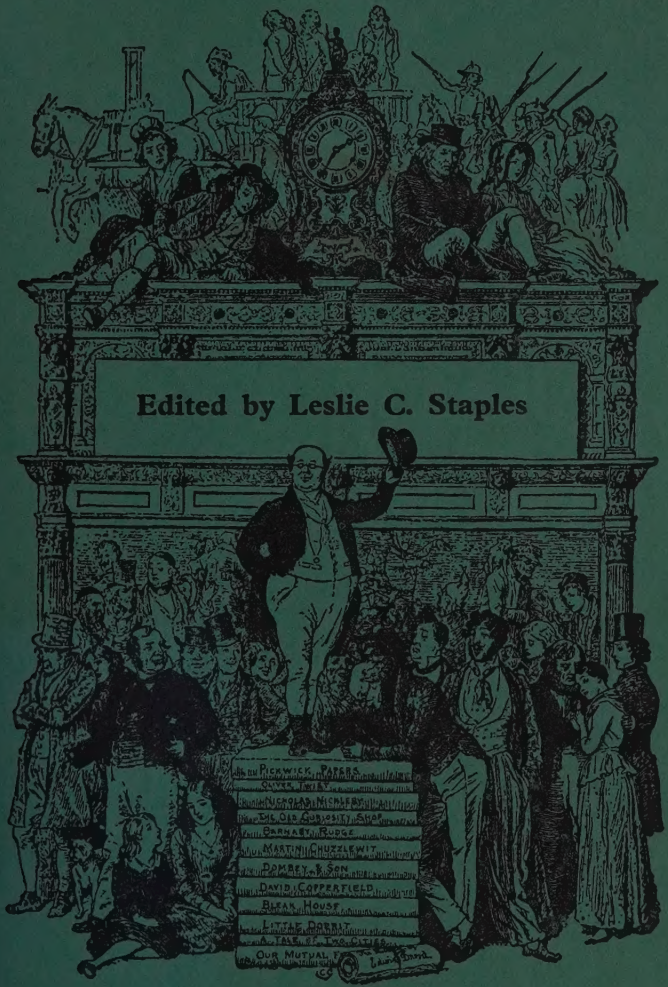
SCANNED 166 of 185

VOL. LI, Part 1

WINTER NUMBER
Published December, 1954

No. 313

THE DICKENSIAN



Edited by Leslie C. Staples

PUBLISHED BY THE DICKENS FELLOWSHIP
THE DICKENS HOUSE, 48 DOUGHTY STREET,
LONDON, W.C.1.

JUBILEE NUMBER

Price TWO SHILLINGS AND SIXPENCE
Subscription rate: Ten Shillings and Sixpence, per annum, post free.

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WALTER T. SPENCER

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27 New Oxford Street,

ESTABLISHED 1884 **London, W.C.1**

Cable and Telegraphic Address: "PHIZ, WESTCENT, LONDON."

Telephone: HOLBORN 3936

First Editions of the Works of Charles Dickens, including Presentation Copies; also Manuscripts, Autograph Letters for Sale

THE DICKENSIAN

1905–1955

FIFTY YEARS

"in all the glory of print"

GOLDEN JUBILEE CELEBRATION

Old Hall, Lincoln's Inn

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The Treasurer and Masters of the Bench of the
Hon. Society of Lincoln's Inn

Friday, January, 7th, 1955

at 7 p.m.

Chairman: The Rt. Hon. the EARL JOWITT
(*President*)

"THE CRITICS"

will discuss

THE DICKENSIAN

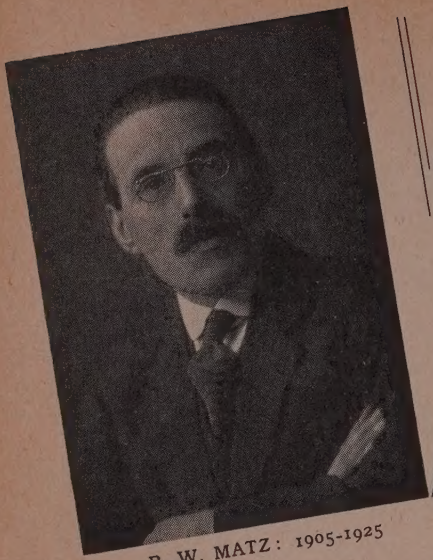
Format	...	Mr. GORDON STOWELL
Biography	...	Mr. COLLIN BROOKS
Research	...	Prof. JOHN BUTT
Book Reviews	...	Mr. K. J. FIELDING
Stage and Screen		Mr. HUGH ROSS WILLIAMSON
Topography	...	"FIELDFARE" of *The Evening News*

As a record of The Dickens Fellowship:
Mr. GEORGE CHADWICK

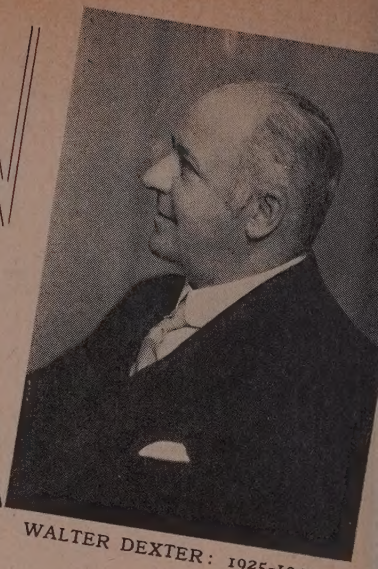
The items they will discuss will be found in the numbers for January 1905, October 1906, February 1914, January 1915, January 1920 and numbers 206, 222, 223, 224, 226, 230, 239, 259, 282, 285, 302, 305, 306, 309, and 312.

All readers are cordially invited to be present.

For other London meetings see page 40.



B. W. MATZ: 1905-1925



WALTER DEXTER: 1925-1944

LESLIE C. STAPLES: 1944-

EDITORS OF *THE DICKENSIAN*

During its Fifty Years of Publication

THE DICKENSIAN

JUBILEE NUMBER

VOL. LI. DECEMBER 1954 No. 312

1905—1955

IN presenting the Jubilee Number of *The Dickensian*, in celebration of the completion of its fiftieth volume, it is fitting that tribute should be paid to the principal figures in its story. On another page appears an outline of that story from the able pen of Mr. Leo Mason, who has himself played no small part in it, but here it is desired to place on record the Fellowship's tribute to some of those to whom the magazine owes its inception, and its continuance for half a century. First comes the name of B. W. Matz, the founder of the Fellowship as well as of its journal, of which he was editor for the first twenty years of its existence. Nor must the name of F. G. Kitton be forgotten, who did so much to develop the plan and who, had he lived, would have been the first editor. The first *Dickensian* committee is remembered with gratitude. Mr. Mason cites their names, and we are happy to print a message in this number from its sole surviving member, Mr. William Miller. Then there is Walter Dexter who, while ably maintaining the tradition brought his own strong personality to bear, together with great knowledge, acumen, and ability, and who occupied the editorial chair for another twenty years until, like his predecessor, he died in harness. It is not possible, of course, to mention the names of the legion of contributors who have so generously given of their best, without thought of personal gain, throughout the years, but there is one name we cannot bring ourselves to omit, that of T. W. Hill. Ever at the right hand of Walter Dexter, the present editor also owes more to him than he can easily express. Tribute must also be paid to the printers, Messrs. A. Brown & Sons, Ltd., who have given so loyally of their experienced services since 1912. A like tribute goes to Mr. A. G. Mason, who has processed the illustrations for many years and to whom, also, the present editor is indebted for much wise and valuable advice. Finally, there remains the name of Miss D. L. Minards who has rendered yeoman service to the magazine throughout her thirty-three years with the Fellowship. In 1934 she compiled an Index to the first thirty volumes, a project that owed its fulfilment to that generous patron of the Fellowship, the late Comte de Suzannet. But not only has Miss Minards given indispensable support to the successive editors in many ways, but when in 1926 the Fellowship undertook itself to publish its magazine, she became responsible for the considerable amount of work involved. We now embark enthusiastically upon our second fifty years, confident that there will be no lack of willing hands to carry on the task, a task which, as E. V. Lucas so memorably said, is a greater monument to Dickens than anything composed of bronze or marble could ever be.

THE EDITOR.

THE DICKENSIAN

A Tale of Fifty Years

By Leo Mason

Chairman of Council 1940-1946
Hon. Sec. Blackburn Branch 1934-1954

DURING recent years Dickensians have been making history; they have fittingly celebrated the Golden Jubilee of the world-wide Dickens Fellowship and by their enthusiasm and monetary gifts, to the total of some ten thousand pounds, have brought the Walter Dexter Memorial Fund to fruition so that at long last the Dickens House—the home of things Dickensian and the Headquarters of the Fellowship—is now very satisfactorily endowed.

From time to time throughout the past fifty years the progress of the Fellowship has been carefully noted by various officials, and numerous students have made many discoveries in the field of Dickensian research. Members of the Fellowship have been fully informed of these discoveries and kept in constant touch with the hub of the Dickensian world, even throughout the difficult periods of two long world-shattering wars, because of the untiring efforts of three enthusiastic Dickensians who have seen to it that the vital link in the chain of fellowship—*The Dickensian*—has never been allowed to fail.

During comparatively recent times the history of the Fellowship from its foundation to the present day has been recorded in the pages of this magazine by Walter Dexter, A. W. Edwards and John Greaves, but some thirty years have elapsed since J. W. T. Ley wrote of the early days of the magazine itself, on the occasion of its twenty-first anniversary when a small private dinner was held at the George and Vulture in celebration of the event.

It is fitting, after fifty years of publication, that this living memorial to Charles Dickens should contain a line or two about itself, and a word or two of appreciation of the services rendered by its three successive editors, B. W. Matz, Walter Dexter and Leslie C. Staples.

In the following lines I have endeavoured to present in an informal manner the salient features of *The Dickensian's* foundation and subsequent history by stating some relevant facts and making a few appropriate observations.

Although the idea of a Dickens Fellowship emanated from the management of the revived *Household Words*, principally, I think, with the commercial object of increasing the sale of the paper, the project did not awaken much interest among its readers. The Dickens Fellowship was eventually founded because of the interest brought to bear by a handful of Dickens students, headed by B. W. Matz, whose sole object was to enlist the support and interest of all persons desirous of expressing in one way or another their appreciation of the life and work of Charles Dickens.

The founders were, however, pleased to be associated with and have the support of *Household Words* because its pages provided a means of communicating official notices and occasional articles

on topics of interest to Dickensians. Within a few months *Household Words* severed the connection by refusing to publish Fellowship news and another periodical, *The Golden Penny*, became, for a short time, the official medium for contacting members. In 1904 *Household Words*, having changed hands, once again resumed its association with the Fellowship.

One of the Dickens students who had helped Matz to found the Fellowship was F. G. Kitton who for a number of years had been collecting and publishing a considerable amount of information relative to Dickens—he was probably the leading authority at that time and was a foundation Vice-President of the Fellowship. From the beginning he had been full of the idea of publishing some form of weekly or monthly periodical devoted entirely to Dickens. B. W. Matz, who was on the staff of Chapman and Hall, had also written various articles on Dickens and was naturally intrigued with Kitton's suggestion but felt that such an ambitious venture should not be embarked upon until the Fellowship itself was firmly established.

The two enthusiasts contented themselves with publishing what were termed Dickens Fellowship Publications; Matz presented *Charles Dickens. The Story of His Life* and Kitton *Dickens and His Illustrators*. Both were excellent publications, sizable, well-printed and profusely illustrated. Full details of the Fellowship, its aims and objects and rules were printed on the insides of the covers and a form was enclosed with each copy for the use of intending members. The publications were sold at the low price of a penny and twopence respectively.

By 1904, however, the membership of the Fellowship had reached the four thousand mark and was continually increasing, the somewhat uncertain dealings with outside magazines and the small space available in them for articles of Dickensian interest prompted Kitton to put forward some definite ideas concerning his cherished ideal of a monthly periodical devoted entirely to Dickens and Fellowship affairs. He and Matz got down to something tangible and Matz made up a prototype or dummy magazine (March 1904). There was no cover and the letterpress commenced double column on the front page, the top of which carried the title *Our Mutual Friend*. It was conceived as a monthly publication at a suggested price of sixpence. A subsidiary title indicated that it was to be *The Journal of the Dickens Fellowship*. The body of the magazine was to contain a number of articles on Dickensian themes, the first four pages were to be devoted to "Notes by Cap'en Cuttle." Fellowship activities were to be recorded month by month in special "Corners" presided over by Dickens characters, "The Needlework and Charitable Guild," a prominent feature of the Fellowship in London during early days, was to be in the charge of Madame Mantalini and Mrs. Jellyby, Sam Weller was to report on "Our Rambles in London," and Vincent Crummles on "Dickens Plays,' etc. There was also to be a section for "Branch News."

Matz placed full details of the proposed venture before the members of council at the March meeting and it was "resolved that a Journal be started of sixteen pages to be published on the

first of every month." No immediate action was taken but the matter was evidently discussed because a second " dummy " was produced, this time, with a distinctive cover, it was the work of F. G. Kitton. The centre of the cover was taken up with a portrait of Charles Dickens above which, in bold lettering, appeared the now familiar title: " *The Dickensian*—Edited by F. G. Kitton, Vice-President of the Dickens Fellowship and author of *Life of Charles Dickens*," etc. Below the portrait were the words: " A monthly Journal for Dickensians and the official organ of the Dickens Fellowship." The suggested price was twopence and the annual subscription to members one shilling and sixpence, post free. It is worthy of note that at this stage the services of Chapman and Hall had been secured as publishers.

There is very little in the way of official records concerning the formative period of *The Dickensian*, but the fact that Kitton dated his prototype October 1904, leads one to conjecture that he had hopes that the first number of the journal might be published about the time when members of the Fellowship would be recommencing their meetings. It is obvious that he made up the " dummy " some considerable time before October because sometime during the summer he was stricken down with an illness which occasioned an operation. I surmise that it was thought at the time that Kitton's illness would prevent him from carrying out his duties as Editor in the immediate future and this would explain why "and B. W. Matz " was inked in, as an afterthought, after Kitton's name on the cover of the prototype, as Joint Editor.

F. G. Kitton, however, died in September and there disappeared from the scene, at the age of 48 years, one of the earliest and most outstanding of Dickens students whose discoveries, writings and extensive collection of Dickensiana afforded much interest and pleasure to the Dickensians of his day and to those who came after them.

At a Council Meeting held about the middle of September 1904, the March resolution with regard to the founding of a magazine was upheld but a note of caution was now added to the effect that " before any steps be taken in the matter a notice should be inserted in the annual report or a canvass taken of members " to ascertain what measure of support would be forthcoming if the venture were embarked upon.

All members, the whole 4,000 of them, were accordingly individually notified by post ! They were requested to return a form stating that they would subscribe a half-crown for one year's subscription to the magazine. Matz, now very keen on launching the magazine, was confident of success, two thousand subscribers were thought to be likely, but whatever the reaction of Fellowship members might prove to be, he seems to have made up his mind to go through with the venture and to have intimated that he wished to relinquish the office of General Secretary to the Fellowship. At the October Council Meeting he reported that the result of the magazine questionnaire indicated that only a mere six per cent. of the members were prepared to risk their half-crowns " which I meanter say, Pip," was not very encouraging, but not entirely unprophetic of the attitude towards the same

magazine in certain quarters of the Fellowship fifty years later. However, Matz insisted on his resignation from the secretaryship and J. W. T. Ley, a newcomer to the Council, was elected to the office. Matz set about compiling the magazine and produced a third "dummy." *The Dickensian* was retained as the title but the cover design now became a facsimile of the cover used by Dickens for the monthly parts of *Pickwick Papers*, which, as every Dickensian knows, were edited by Boz, or else, what is the use of being a member of the Fellowship, as Mr. Squeers would no doubt observe. *The Dickensian*, however, was to be edited by "Mr. Pott and Mr. Slurk," and the subsidiary title was once again altered, this time, to read "A magazine for Dickens Lovers and Monthly Record of the Dickens Fellowship." I think Matz thought out the wording of the subsidiary title very carefully, he also planned to have a different cover design each month indicative of the covers of the novels when published in parts, to be followed by many different portraits of Dickens and pictures of the houses he had lived in. Features, appertaining to Fellowship activities, conducted by Dickens characters were ruled out as not now being suited to the purpose of the magazine; "Notes by Cap'en Cuttle" was preserved, however, by inference, with "When Found—", a feature maintained to the present day and used by successive editors for conveying special news of current Dickensian interest, "Dickensiana" and "Branch Reports" have also been continued. In short, the original plan of the magazine has been adhered to throughout the years.

Late in January 1905 the first number of *The Dickensian*, which bore the name of B. W. Matz as editor, appeared on the bookstalls; about 2,000 copies had been printed, it was something of a gamble, there were no funds but advertisement space had been let to some of the larger publishing houses and a few smaller concerns. Chapman and Hall were the publishers and Nelson and Sons published 1,000 copies in America complete with American advertisements. By the end of the first week it was a case of history repeating itself, but this time it was *The Dickensian* that was triumphant! The whole of the copies had been sold and a second edition was printed and disposed of, making a total sale of some 4,000 copies. Subsequent monthly numbers maintained a steady circulation of about 2,000 copies at an annual subscription of four shillings, there was a reduction of a shilling to members of the Fellowship. In the very successful launching of the magazine Matz had been materially aided by Messrs. J. E. Palmer, W. Miller, T. W. Tyrell, S. Marriot, J. W. T. Ley and E. P. Haslam, but it was not long before the entire management of *The Dickensian* became the sole charge of Matz, under whose enthusiastic and wise editorship, it prospered and gained increasing prestige in the literary field throughout the first twenty years of its life. With regard to the final conception of the magazine itself, in a foreword to the first number, Matz stated: "Almost from the inception of the Fellowship it has been the expressed desire of its members that a magazine devoted to Dickens, his life, work and influence, should be published." Strangely enough, as we have noted, when the members were asked to pledge their support of such a magazine,

only a very few of them were prepared to risk as little as half-a-crown. The Journal, as we have seen, was originally conceived simply as "The Journal of the Dickens Fellowship" in a later conception it became "A Monthly Journal for Dickensians" *and the Official Organ of the Dickens Fellowship* and finally, perhaps on account of the apathy of its members, it appeared on publication as "A Magazine for Dickens Lovers" in which a few pages were devoted to brief accounts of Fellowship activities. Although *The Dickensian* was associated with the Fellowship, it is obvious that Matz did not intend its scope or main purpose to be confined within its limited circle and later in the foreword he comments that while Fellowship News would be recorded, "it is intended that the magazine shall be, as a whole, devoted to the vast subject of Dickens generally . . . original articles on the multifarious phases of Dickens's life and works, reproduction of pictures of places, portraits and other illustrations, reviews of his works, articles bibliographical, biographical, topographical . . . from sources hitherto unavailable to the public . . . indeed, anything and everything likely to interest the student and lover of England's great novelist." In the June number the editor made the following rather interesting statement: "There seems to be an impression among some members of the Fellowship that *The Dickensian* has superseded *Household Words* as the official organ of the society. In view of this evident misunderstanding it may be well to point out that *Household Words* is still the weekly organ of the Society's doings, it is essential that they shall subscribe to that paper." When *Household Words* finally went out of existence, *Great Thoughts* became the official organ and the system of using such periodicals continued for a number of years. Matz had founded a magazine which was to be the authority on things Dickensian and which was ultimately to hold a unique place among the literary Journals of the world.

Rising costs and paper shortage caused by the first World War occasioned difficulties and in 1919 *The Dickensian* became a quarterly publication with a newly-designed cover which was used until three years ago when it was superseded by the present one. In 1920, London Dickensians made a great step forward, thoroughly reorganised themselves into Fellowship Headquarters, set themselves on a sound financial basis and at long last officially acknowledged the prestige, interest and support gained for the Fellowship by *The Dickensian*, by declaring it to be an integral part of the Fellowship itself. The subscription to Headquarters was adjusted to include the magazine. On May 1st, 1925, the Fellowship took possession of The Dickens House, Doughty Street, and two months later on July 17th, Bertram Waldrom Matz died. From the personal testimonies of his friends, by the measure of his achievements and accomplishments and the many tributes paid to his memory it is evident that the founder of the Fellowship and first editor of *The Dickensian* was a man of sincerity and culture, a sound organiser and an inspiration to all who were associated with him. A Dickensian among Dickensians.

In the first volume of *The Dickensian*, 1905, the name of Walter Dexter appeared at the head of a contribution and it was Mr.

Dexter who took over the duties of editor in 1925. For twenty years he had given yeoman service to the Fellowship, as member of Council, dramatic secretary, general secretary and treasurer, all in an honorary capacity, and had taken a major part in the procuring of The Dickens House. He set about the duties of his new office with renewed enthusiasm, and his sound judgement and natural abilities backed by an extensive knowledge of Dickens soon became self evident in the pages of the magazine. Throughout his life Dexter was an indefatigable collector of pictures, portraits and cartoons of Dickensian interest and in his younger days had devoted his leisure moments from work in a city office to writing occasional articles on Dickens in various magazines and "assailing the outer bastions of Fleet Street as a free-lance complete with camera, then a novelty." As might be expected, the pages of *The Dickensian* were now enlivened with a profusion of illustrations. Miniature pictures of Dickens characters made a decorative heading or border to a page, a scene from a particular novel under review, illustrated the title, and the first page of each issue of the magazine was headed with an attractive little picture of Cap'en Cuttle, of whom Dexter was rather fond, to amplify the familiar feature " When Found—." A lighter shade of green for the cover and a somewhat wider margin at the top of pages together with the use of varying sizes and styles of type for captions to articles greatly added to the attractiveness of the magazine and broke away completely from the rather stereotyped and text-book appearance of the earlier issues. An outstanding feature of Dexter's regime was the printing of whole collections of previously unpublished letters of Dickens; in this he was materially aided by the kindness of his friend the late Count de Suzannet. It was because of his extensive knowledge of Dickens and his interest in annotating and editing the novelist's prolific correspondence which was continuously being brought to light, that he was delegated the formidable task of compiling the huge collection of letters for the Nonesuch Press. His own contributions to *The Dickensian* were numerous and indicative of original research, adding much to our knowledge of Dickens. The very successful Pickwick Centenary Celebrations held in 1936, which owed much to his enthusiasm, were featured in five issues of *The Dickensian*, the Pickwick cover was used once again, and much information appertaining to the particular novel was presented by the editor, culled from a mass of material collected by him over a period of years. The Dickens House had just been acquired when Dexter began his editorship and from that time *The Dickensian* has been published by the Fellowship at Doughty Street.

Walter Dexter set his heart on increasing the size and circulation of the magazine; he succeeded in doing both and produced a sizable periodical with a quarterly sale of some 3,500 copies, almost doubling the figure at which he took over. He was quite of the opinion that every member of the Fellowship should be a subscriber to *The Dickensian*, except of course additional members of the same family, and was a keen advocate of the inclusive rule introduced in 1927. He never forgave (in the Pickwickian sense) the members of some of the older branches who refused to

co-operate in the scheme. He understood quite well that many individuals who read the novels did not wish to join the Fellowship or take any special interest in Dickens himself but he thought it a contradiction in terms that anyone should join the Fellowship, claim to be a Dickensian—a Dickens lover—and yet not be prepared to support the magazine which was exclusively devoted to the life and work of the great novelist in whom he purported to be interested.

When war clouds gathered and finally broke in 1939 and some of the branches ceased to function for a time and for some unaccountable reason their members discontinued taking *The Dickensian*, Dexter redoubled his own efforts and brought it to the notice of members, in no uncertain terms, that it was their duty to support the magazine and "When Found—" on more than one occasion contained some genuine Dexter views on the matter.

Through paper shortage and war-time restrictions he was compelled to reduce the number of pages in the magazine but resorting to the use of smaller type did not deplete the contents unduly and in spite of enemy action he maintained the standard and brought out *The Dickensian* at the appointed times. One evening in May 1944 he was stricken with a severe pain round the heart. At first, it was thought that a long period of rest would effect a cure, but it was not to be, and Walter Dexter died on May 16th, 1944.

Stirred to join the Fellowship in 1905, after perusal of the first number of *The Dickensian*, which he had purchased at a bookstall, he had eventually become its editor and had directed its fortunes for a period of 19 years. I knew Dexter well; he was my friend, he and Mrs. Dexter were my kind and gracious hosts on several occasions. Dexter was a man of stature in every sense of the word, a man of outstanding culture with many interests; a truly delightful friend. One of his outstanding characteristics was the forthright manner in which he expressed his opinion; he consistently took the larger view of things and in so far as the Fellowship and *The Dickensian* were concerned it was ever his aim to raise their prestige.

On the morning of May 20th, 1944, when some of his Dickensian friends had wished him a last farewell at Golders Green, it was the uppermost thought in everyone's mind that the Fellowship had lost one of its greatest pillars of strength and *The Dickensian* had been deprived of an editor who was a Dickens student of international repute.

Here, according to the present editor, this account should end, but a little more must be said in order to complete the record of 50 years.

Many present-day readers of *The Dickensian* are well aware that Leslie C. Staples came into prominence when he took over the secretaryship of The Dickens Fellowship at a moment's notice when S. J. Rust died suddenly just after the outbreak of war in 1939. He had been a member of Headquarters for many years but business affairs had prevented him from taking any form of office. Although I had attended a number of Annual Conferences and various Headquarters Meetings, I had no recollection of him prior to the Conference held at Bath in 1939, on which occasion

I remember having a word or two with him. Our next meeting was at Euston Station in the spring of 1940. I had travelled up to London for the first war-time Conference and had asked Dexter not to trouble to meet me. I had no sooner set foot on the platform, however, when I received a very cheery greeting from Mr. Staples. I shall always associate Mr. Staples with that particular day because as we went out of the station I noted bricklayers rushing up last-minute air raid shelters, and heard the paper-sellers spreading the news that the Nazis were sweeping everything before them and had entered Boulogne.

First impressions are generally lasting ones and I felt at the time that the new General Secretary was just the right sort of individual to handle Fellowship affairs during the coming times of stress. From that day onwards we met and corresponded on a number of occasions and it needs no words of mine to recall the outstanding services rendered to the Fellowship by Mr. Staples during the long years of war.

Again at Conference time in 1943, I was spending the weekend with Walter Dexter, we were chatting about Fellowship matters, when Dexter suddenly asked me who I thought would be suitable to follow him as editor of *The Dickensian*. I replied, jokingly, that I should require notice of the question, and in any case I didn't think that the matter was at all pressing. He smiled and moved his head a little from side to side and said " Oh, it's just as well to have someone in mind." After a short pause he continued " You know, there's that young man Staples. I think he would do very well, but he says he plans to spend his time travelling abroad after the war, so I don't know, I don't know."

The rest of the story is soon told. It was, indeed, Mr. Staples who once again rose to the occasion and took charge of *The Dickensian* in 1944. He had barely settled himself in the editor's chair when the Nazis launched their final attack and by the means of flying bombs did their best to drive him out of it. Those who had experience of flying bombs will realise only too well that it took a lot of enthusiasm and determination to " stick to Dickens " at such a time, especially when the engine stopped and " the thing " started to come down. However, the editor assumed the rôle of Mark Tapley, the war came to an end, and ten years later we still have with us Mr. Staples, The Dickens Fellowship, The Dickens House and *The Dickensian*.

Of the three editors of *The Dickensian*, Mr. Staples, in many ways, has had the most difficult time. It has been a difficult task to maintain *The Dickensian* at a popular price and yet retain its high standard. By resorting to the original larger type and effecting other economies and by the whole-hearted co-operation of A. Brown and Sons, Ltd., who have been the printers of the magazine for 43 years, and most important of all, by securing the goodwill and services of several notable contributors, Mr. Staples has succeeded in holding the interest and support of genuine students of Dickens everywhere by bringing to their notice the very latest findings in the field of Dickensian research. Fellowship activities, Dickensiana, reviews of recent books, and editorial comment on current affairs have all had space allotted

to them. Articles of a light nature, snippets and a greater number of illustrations to suit the taste of the " not so deeply interested " member of the Fellowship will, I am sure, be only too willingly printed in the increased number of pages made possible in the magazine, when that particular type of member emulates the enthusiasm of *The Dickensian's* successive editors and by giving his whole-hearted support to the magazine restores its pre-war circulation. In conclusion, one cannot attempt to mention the names of the many distinguished contributors. There have been hundreds. As I glance over the list of names of the chosen few who were present at *The Dickensian's* coming of age celebration. I notice the names of Mr. W. Miller and Mr. A. W. Edwards, both of whom are still happily with us, they can look back over the whole of the fifty years; also two others, Mr. T. W. Hill and Mr. J. H. McNulty, but lately gone from us, who for more than thirty years were valued contributors to the magazine. All who have the interests of *The Dickensian* at heart will, I am sure, congratulate the editor and indeed themselves on having helped to bring *The Dickensian* to its Golden Jubilee.

Ad Multos Annos.

WHY *THE DICKENSIAN?*

By Edward Wagenknecht

THE fiftieth anniversary of *The Dickensian* gives one to ponder a phenomenon: no other periodical devoted to a single author has ever enjoyed a comparable success. *The Sir Walter Scott Quarterly* lasted but four numbers; *The Mark Twain Quarterly* is much younger than *The Dickensian*, much smaller, and less exclusively concerned with its ostensible subject; *The Trollopian* has now become *Nineteenth Century Fiction*.

In a sense, the fact is, of course, the fact's best justification, for it is inconceivable that such a publication should, thus uniquely, have survived without satisfying a need. Yet the truth is not single but many-sided, and Plato's saying that the unexamined life is not worth living does not lack its application to the corporate aspects of existence. Why, then, *The Dickensian*?

Well, why the Fellowship itself? Why the body of which *The Dickensian* is the organ, the projection, the power of extension, the putting forth of itself in tangible aspect, the permanent record in paper and ink? Reading is the least gregarious of all pleasures, but it is a pleasure known only to men, and the fact that the man reads does not destroy his need for human contacts, certainly does not destroy his tendency to share the pleasures of his reading with others and to find them redoubled through such sharing. Not all Dickensians are members of the Fellowship any more than (comparing small things with great) all Christians are members of the Church, but the church need made itself felt from the very beginnings of the Christian movement, and few can be so foolish as to believe that Christianity would prosper better in the world if all the churches were destroyed. Neither here nor in any other connection does the Fellowship enter any exclusivistic or authoritarian claims. But by the same token, it

must modestly but firmly insist that it has its place in the Dickens world. It even believes that that place owns some importance.

Through *The Dickensian* the Fellowship provides a clearing-house for Dickensiana. Here, again, it has established, and desires to establish, no monopoly. There are learned journals. There are newspapers and magazines. And there are few of these where Dickens is a stranger. But no other journal could be expected to devote to any one author the space which Dickens commands in *The Dickensian*; moreover, there are a great many minor items, neither "scholarly" nor "critical" in the proper definition of those proud terms, which still have their claim (and which exercise their capacity for delight), upon all who find a special pleasure in Dickens's work; and *The Dickensian* is the logical place for them.

Look, for example, at the hitherto unrecorded scraps and cuttings from Dickens's novels which the publication has printed lately. Look at the immensely useful and enlightening annotations which were made by our good and deeply-mourned friend, the late T. W. Hill. I certainly would not wish to suggest for a moment that these things are "unimportant." I would not even say that had there been no *Dickensian*, they must have failed of publication. But it does seem to me that it is an immense advantage to have them all together in a journal which is addressed specifically to Dickens lovers, and which these people are, in general, much more likely to possess than they can as a body expect to find themselves in possession of any other single organ in which such material could have appeared. A very different type of service was rendered by the publication, at the book's centenary, of L. A. G. Strong's fine essay on *David Copperfield*, exemplifying, I think, a type of critical evaluation of Dickens's work by distinguished writers to which I hope the magazine will increasingly devote itself in the future.

All life exists in a state of perilous balance, and a magazine like *The Dickensian* is not the last to feel the strain involved. If the Fellowship did not love Dickens and believe in him, it would never have come into being; it is fortunate, therefore, that its editors have always been sensible men who distinguished clearly between loyalty and chauvinism and who remembered that idolatry is not only a sin in the eyes of God but the worst possible disservice to the idol itself. The controversy over Dickens's relations with Ellen Ternan which has had so much space in *The Dickensian* and elsewhere during recent years is the most sensational example of this. I do not believe that the magazine has ever made the mistake of identifying itself with the eager young debater who leaped to his feet when a particularly cogent point was made by his opponent and shouted, "I deny the facts! I deny the facts!" On the other hand, it has performed the good service of pointing out, upon numerous occasions, that a number of circumstances stated as facts had not really been established. It has rebuked ignorance and bad judgment. It has corrected misconceptions. It has opposed its knowledge against the ignorance of others, placed its good will over against others' malice. And this *is*, I think, an important service; without it there would be a little more darkness in the world and less light.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

SIR,

The Dickensian, now celebrating its Jubilee, has played a great part in the history and development of the Fellowship, confining itself during its fifty years, entirely to matters relating to Dickens and the Fellowship.

From its beginning in 1905, it has been a mine of information of the greatest value to Dickens lovers, and those possessing a complete set have a storehouse of knowledge on every conceivable aspect of Dickens's life and work. Since that beginning it has flourished, first for more than twenty years under the editorship of its founder, B. W. Matz, then for nearly another twenty under the enthusiastic Walter Dexter, and now for ten years our good friend, Leslie C. Staples has carried on the task with distinction and merit.

The Dickensian has consistently fostered our aims and like *Charley's Aunt* is still running, and like *Johnnie Walker* is still going strong. It has weathered two world wars, although during the second it was denuded of one of its most valuable features, its index, and its very existence was threatened by the paper shortage. But it came through triumphantly. I know of no other society that possesses a comparable magazine, in itself a tribute to its three editors. Long may it continue to serve lovers of Charles Dickens, and to keep his memory green.

A. W. EDWARDS,
Hon. Secretary, 1925-36.

SIR,

At your kind invitation I set down a few recollections of the founding of *The Dickensian*, which first appeared fifty years ago.

When the Dickens Fellowship severed its connection with the revived *Household Words*, it was generally felt that the Fellowship should have a publication of its own. After consideration, the council appointed a committee consisting of B. W. Matz, J. W. T. Ley, T. W. Tyrrell, and myself as Librarian, to go into ways and means. After many meetings we drew up a report which was submitted to council and at length it was decided that a magazine should be published and that B. W. Matz should be its editor.

During the discussions the Chairman, J. E. Palmer, expressed the hope that the funds of the Fellowship would not be called upon to supply any possible deficit. In the opinion of the sub-committee there was no such danger, the support of the members being sufficient guarantee of solvency. Council was further informed that there was no lack of material, as articles on Dickens and his works published since 1836 could be reprinted with advantage. But by the time the third number appeared the editor had sufficient new material to fill the magazine for many months, the plan was abandoned, and it has never been necessary to revive it.

May I take this opportunity, as the sole surviving member of the original *Dickensian* Committee, of congratulating you, Sir, on maintaining as high a standard of editorship as your two predecessors? And long may you flourish in that capacity.

WILLIAM MILLER.

A CHRISTMAS CAROL

ITS ORIGIN AND DESIGN

By John Butt

THE fancy of writing a Christmas book occurred to Dickens when he was at Manchester in the first week of October 1843. On his return in the second week he set to work on *A Christmas Carol* and completed it by the end of November. We know something about the drift of his thoughts during those weeks, for he was much occupied in advising Miss Coutts on how best to distribute her charities, which seem to have been specially directed at that time towards the care of destitute children. He had paid a visit to a Ragged School on her behalf in mid-September, and had sent her what he called " a sledge-hammer account " of the place.[1] At the same time he had written to the editor of the *Edinburgh Review*, laying stress on the state of ignorance, misery, and neglect which he found there.[2]

His visit to Manchester was also on charitable business. He was to preside at the opening of the Athenaeum, a sort of working man's institute, and he took the occasion for speaking about the education of the poor. This institution, he said, offered " blameless, rational enjoyment . . . to every youth and man in this great town." And the effect would be that though a man " should find it hard for a season even to keep the wolf—hunger —from his door, let him but once have chased the dragon—ignorance —from his hearth, and self-respect and hope are left him." Nor need the Manchester employer fear what a little learning may do, for " the more the man who improves his leisure in such a place learns, the better, gentler, kinder man he must become. When he knows how much great minds have suffered for the truth in every age and time, and to what dismal persecutions opinion has been exposed, he will become more tolerant of other men's belief in all matters, and will incline more leniently to their sentiments when they chance to differ from his own. Understanding that the relations between himself and his employers involve a mutual duty and responsibility, he will discharge his part of the implied contract cheerfully, satisfactorily, and honourably; for the history of every useful life warns him to shape his course in that direction."[3]

The care of poor children, the banishment of ignorance as one means of banishing poverty, the establishment of relations of " mutual duty and responsibility " between employer and employed: while his mind was running on these subjects, Dickens had also to apply himself to the next number of the novel on which he was at work. This was *Martin Chuzzlewit*. No. 10, in which the marriage of Mercy Pecksniff to Jonas Chuzzlewit is related,

[1] September 16th, 1843; printed in Edgar Johnson, *The Heart of Charles Dickens* [New York, 1952], pp. 50-4. See also " Nonesuch " *Letters*, I, 541-2. As early as March, he had been " so perfectly stricken down " by a Blue Book, sent him by Southwood Smith, that he contemplated writing " a very cheap pamphlet called An Appeal to the People of England on behalf of the Poor Man's Child." This was abandoned a few days later in favour of a " sledge-hammer " blow [I, 512]. He may already have forseen an appeal something like the *Carol*.

[2] Nonesuch *Letters*, I, 540.

[3] National Library Edition of the Works of Charles Dickens, XIX, 389-92.

had been published a few days before he set out for Manchester. The chapters, therefore, which he was writing concurrently with the *Carol* are those describing a swindle named the Anglo-Bengalee Disinterested Loan and Life Assurance Company, and the rapacity and humbug of its three promoters, Montague Tigg, David Crimple, and Mr. Jobling. And before the Number is brought to an end we are allowed a glance at humbug and self-seeking in other walks of life, in the shape of Mrs. Gamp, so full of zeal for her patients that she " worrits " herself, and of Mr. Mould, the undertaker, civilly greeting an invalid with a view to his future custom.

Thus Dickens's thoughts in October 1843 were running upon humbug, self-seeking, and rapacity, as well as upon the care of poor children, the banishment of ignorance, and the duties and responsibilities of employer and employed. But what also is more likely than that, when meditating his first Christmas Book, he should return in mind to the last story he had written for Christmas ? The ninth monthly number of *Pickwick Papers* was published in December 1836, and was clearly intended to suit the Christmas season. In that number Mr. Pickwick and his friends go down to Dingley Dell to celebrate Christmas with Mr. Wardle and his family. The principal ceremonies at Dingley Dell are feasting and dancing with the whole household, servants and all, collected together, and the time is passed on Christmas Eve with songs, forfeits, and old stories. One of these old stories has a chapter to itself [Chapter XXIX], and it is important for our purpose. It is the story of the sexton, Gabriel Grub, " an ill-conditioned, cross-grained, surly fellow—a morose and lonely man, who consorted with nobody but himself . . . and who eyed each merry face as it passed him by, with such a deep scowl of malice and ill-humour, as it was difficult to meet, without feeling something the worse for." Grub's notion of how to pass the evening of Christmas Eve most appropriately is to labour in his profession by digging a grave. There he is interrupted by goblins, who carry him off to a large cavern, the palace of their king, where Grub is shown some *tableaux vivants*. One group of pictures in particular showed a humble family of children welcoming their father as he returns home, wet and weary, with the snow clinging to his coat; and later the same family is seen assembled in a small bedroom where the youngest and fairest child lies dying. These pictures and others are presented to show Grub that men who work hard are happy, that women are often superior to sorrow, adversity, and distress, and that men like himself " who snarled at the mirth and cheerfulness of others, were the foulest weeds on the fair surface of the earth." The upshot is that when the goblins leave him, Grub returns an altered and contented man.

Thus in the December Number of *Pickwick Papers* and in Dickens's autumn meditations of 1843 are to be found the principal ingredients of *A Christmas Carol*. It is not difficult to recognise in Ebenezer Scrooge the ill-conditioned, cross-grained Grub, who consorted with nobody but himself; and the deep scowl of malice and ill-humour, with which Grub eyed each merry face is elaborated in the surly reception Scrooge offers to his jovial nephew. Just as Grub is carried off by supernatural powers and

shown representations of what he is missing in life by his sulky behaviour, so Scrooge is also transported. And the effect in each case is the same: the surly man suffers a nursery tale transformation into a lover of his kind. Furthermore, the picture which Grub sees of a humble family welcoming the return of their father on a winter evening and, later, gathering round the deathbed of the youngest child is a first sketch of the Cratchit family, in which Bob Cratchit and Tiny Tim are already faintly delineated. But whereas we are shown little evidence of Grub's surliness and none of his reformed character, we are permitted to see Scrooge in action before and after his transformation; and whereas the visions presented to Grub have no relation to the life he has lived, the visions Scrooge sees are episodes in his own life and in the lives of people he knows.

It is in the elaboration of the *Pickwick* story that Dickens draws upon his recent meditations. Scrooge is not only cross-grained; he is, as his name suggests, a " screw," a " squeezing, wrenching, grasping, scraping, clutching, covetous old sinner." Although there is no humbug in him—indeed, he constantly suspects it in others—he belongs with the rapacious, self-seeking characters of *Martin Chuzzlewit*. Perhaps he is most closely related to old Martin, who like Scrooge also suffers a transformation. And at least two other characters in the Christmas book bear some relation to the characters in the novel: the washerwoman who steals the bedclothes from Scrooge's death-bed shares Mrs. Gamp's rapacity. if not her more amiable qualities; and the loyalty of Bob Cratchit to the employer who oppresses him recalls Tom Pinch's loyalty to Mr. Pecksniff.

We have seen how deeply Dickens had been shocked at the state of ignorance and neglect in the Ragged School at Saffron Hill, and how he had claimed in his speech at the Manchester Athenaeum that ignorance is the most prolific parent of misery and crime. This theme also is echoed in the *Carol* when the Ghost of Christmas Present reveals a boy and a girl, " yellow, meagre, ragged, scowling, wolfish; but prostrate, too, in their humility." The boy, we are told, is Ignorance, the girl Want. " Beware them both," says the Spirit, in the blank verse in which much of these books is unwittingly written; " beware them both, and all of their degree; but most of all beware this boy, for on his brow I see that written which is Doom, unless the writing be erased. Deny it! Slander those who tell it ye! Admit it for your factious purposes, and make it worse! And bide the end!" That is all that is seen of this cartoon figure in the *Carol*; but he was to reappear more impressively in *The Haunted Man*, and more impressively still as Jo, the crossing sweeper, in *Bleak House*.

It will be recalled that the Manchester merchant had no need to fear the banishment of ignorance, for the man who has improved his leisure will understand " that the relations between himself and his employers involve a mutual duty and responsibility, [and] he will discharge his part of the implied contract cheerfully, satisfactorily, and honourably." This is one of Dickens's favourite themes. It had been implicit in the relations of Mr. Pickwick and Sam Weller, and explicit in the relations of the Cheeryble brothers

with Tim Linkinwater and Nicholas Nickleby. It is now to become prominent in the first three Christmas Books; and in particular it supplies in the *Carol* that connexion between the surly man and his visions which had been lacking when Dickens treated the theme of transformation in the story of Gabriel Grub. Grub in his visions sees nothing connected with his own life, past or present; but Scrooge, the stingy employer, is first reminded of how he was treated as an apprentice by his employer Fezziwig, is then shown what his treatment of Cratchit means to the Cratchit family, and lastly is made to recognise in the death of Tiny Tim what the end of it is likely to be.

I believe this book to be important in Dickens's development as a story-teller, since it is the first time he had attempted to direct his fertile imagination within the limits of a carefully constructed and premeditated plot. There is indeed no external evidence, in the shape of letters or draft sketch, to show what were his initial intentions. But the book as it stands bears the marks of constructive care at the outset. The opening picture of the unregenerate Scrooge, surly towards his clerk and his nephew, is balanced by the closing picture of Scrooge transformed, his transformation evident in his treatment of clerk and nephew; and the process of transformation is nicely graded in the visitations of the three Spirits. This is the first occasion of Dickens discovering a plot sufficient to carry his message, and a plot coterminous with his message, a plot, that is to say, the whole of which bears upon his message and does not overlap it. He had at last begun to keep a steadier eye upon the purpose and design of his work.

RECENT DICKENSIANA

Two unusual presentations of Dickens's *A Christmas Carol* have appeared this Christmas. Mr. Philo Calhoun has arranged a version for reading aloud which retains all the features so cherished and desired on such occasions. This has appeared, together with an admirable introduction, in America. In London, Hamish Hamilton Ltd. has brought out a pictorial version (at 3*s.* 6*d.*) for the youngest Dickensians. The story is briefly told by R. J. Cruikshank, and as it proceeds, the reader is invited to open successive windows in a delightful picture of a London scene, each window revealing a further episode in the story. Here is a grand addition for the Christmas stocking.

Three other books are reviewed on p. 41. Somerset Maugham's *Ten Novels and their Authors* (Heinemann, 21*s.*) will be reviewed in the next issue.

Travellers familiar with the Willards' Hotel at Washington will revel in *Willards of Washington*, by Garrett Laidlaw Eskew (Coward McCann, $4) for its entertaining history of that celebrated hostelry which is eminently worthy of its great reputation. It stands on the site of a small house in which Dickens stayed in 1842, after which visit he wrote his curiously incorrect prophesy about the capital.

Dickens and the Royal Literary Fund, *Times Literary Supplement*, October 15th and 22nd.

Carlyle, Dickens, and William Maccall. K. J. Fielding. *Notes and Queries*, November.

Charles Dickens and 'The Ruffian'. K. J. Fielding. *English*, Autumn No.

JOHN FORSTER AND DICKENS'S BOOK OF MEMORANDA

By Felix Aylmer

JOHN FORSTER devotes a chapter of his *Life of Charles Dickens* to the description of a manuscript notebook, found after Dickens's death, which contained a heterogeneous list of names, titles, character sketches, plots and scraps of dialogue, intended for use, and much of it already used, in his writings. According to the terms of his will this became the property of Georgina Hogarth. She evidently gave it, long before her death, to her niece, Kate Perugini; for in 1892 Mrs. Perugini presented it to Mr. and Mrs. Comyns Carr, who in 1918 gave it to the Red Cross sale at Christie's, where it fetched £325. Either on that occasion or soon afterwards it was apparently bought by Mr. Gabriel Wells, who sold it, for $4,000, to Mr. Jerome Kern, the composer. (The initials "G.W." and the figure appear in an annotated copy of a later sale catalogue.) Since then it has remained in America. When Mr. Kern disposed of his library in 1929, the book was bought, for $15,000, by Dr. Rosenbach on behalf (as I am given to understand) of Mr. Owen D. Young; and during the last war it found, with the rest of this gentleman's collection, a permanent home with the Berg Collection in the New York Public Library. A recent visit to America has enabled me to examine it. As it is intended eventually to publish the more important manuscript material preserved in these collections, a complete account of those portions of the memoranda omitted by Forster (which amount to some three dozen items) cannot at present be given. Some notes on the subject may, however, be of interest.[1]

Besides Forster's there have been published two other selections from the book: one in an appendix to the Nonesuch edition of the *Letters*, and the other in Mrs. Comyns Carr's *Reminiscences*. It would, perhaps, be more accurate to describe these as selections from Forster's selection, for neither introduces matter not quoted by Forster, though both correct him on minor points. Mrs. Carr, for instance, includes the initials "Miss C.B." by which Dickens indicated the original of "The enthusiastically complimentary person," evidently omitted by Forster to avoid giving offence; while Walter Dexter, in the Nonesuch appendix, restores Dickens's form of the note "Buying poor shabby—father?—a new hat. So incongruous that it makes him like African King Boy, or King George: who is usually full-dressed in a cocked hat or a waistcoat—and nothing else." Forster changed this to "when he has nothing upon him but a cocked hat or a waistcoat," presumably to avoid ambiguity. This shows that the original, or a transcript, was available to both, and the fact that neither gave us anything new suggests that Mrs. Carr, when she handed over the book to be sold, entered into an undertaking to publish nothing from it that had not already appeared in print, in order not to depreciate the value of the property. J. W. T. Ley, in his edition of the *Life*, has a note quoting Mrs. Carr's completion of a list of Titles,

[1] My thanks are due to Mr. Henry C. Dickens and the Directors of the New York Public Library for permission to quote from copyright material. F.A.

defective as given by Forster, for the "story in two periods," which developed into *A Tale of Two Cities*. This is a slip on Ley's part, due to Forster's habit of disturbing Dickens's order for his own purposes. In fact Ley had just printed the missing titles eight pages earlier.

The Nonesuch version is, to all intents and purposes, Forster's chapter on the subject with his comments left out. Those entries which he had placed in other chapters (without noting their origin) have been missed; so that the selection is shorter by a dozen items than Forster's. Mrs. Comyns Carr's version is shorter still by another thirty entries. Her book, though undated, mentions the sale of the volume, so that the original was not in her hands at the time it was written, though a transcript, or some notes, must have been.

In general, there is not likely to be much quarrel over Forster's omissions, though we shall be glad to have them restored. "The Family's legs" strikes me as an agreeable subject for contemplation; and there is a picture of "The old servant expecting the family to come back. Left in the deserted house and staying there," which makes one wonder whether Tchekhov ever saw the book. He uses the situation for his final curtain in *The Cherry Orchard*. (Another instance, from among those printed by Forster, suggests that Dickens's surplus ideas did not all go unused. Readers of Stephen Leacock may see that his *Doctor So and So* is in effect a development of Dickens's "mysterious character . . . 'Necessary to be very careful in that direction.' 'In what direction?' 'B.' 'You don't say so. What, do you mean that C.?' 'Is aware of D.' 'Exactly.'") Perhaps the most unexpected entries of the lot are a couple of puns, quoted by Forster as extempore sallies.

With the exception of four subjects for readings jotted down at the reverse end of the book, the entries occupy twenty-five pages. They are written consecutively just, it is clear, as they occurred to him, though the lists of names and titles were perhaps added to at different times.

Of the subjects for stories all without exception are quoted by Forster, though not all in the chapter devoted to the book. The notes date from 1855 and, when ideas have been used by Dickens, Forster generally introduces them in his discussion of the works concerned, which include all the novels from *Little Dorrit* onwards. One character sketch, "She sacrificed to children, and sufficiently rewarded . . . etc.," evidently inspired by Georgina Hogarth, is quoted in an early chapter, where he deals with her first joining the Dickens household. The balance, from which he constructs the seventh chapter of his ninth book, are given, not in Dickens's order, but grouped according to such community of idea as he could find in them. The lists of names show only one omission: "Harmon."

Forster's treatment of these names is rather odd. In spite of his assurance that they appear in the notebook "in the exact following classes and order," after the first five short groups he does not follow Dickens's order at all, a group of as many as seven common to both being exceptional. In this rearrangement he

pursues no method that I am able to detect. Indeed, an appropriate principle, other than alphabetical order, would be difficult to suggest. He simply shuffles away at the two hundred odd names, disturbing even a group of four variants on the same theme: where Dickens has "Stiltington, Stiltwalk, Stiltingstalk, Stiltstalking," detaching the first of these and depositing it a column and a half away, as if determined to edit at all costs. In two instances he contributes Christian names, "Jonathan" and "Philip," where Dickens has only surnames, "Knotwell" and "Browndress."

In other parts of the memoranda his editorial license is less puzzling. In one place he adds, probably from a letter, the reflection: "Might not a presentation of this far from uncommon class of character, if I could put it strongly enough, be likely to lead some men to reflect and change a little? I think it has never been done." There are several occasions when he feels called upon to improve Dickens's phrasing, and on one he censors his author in the interests of the young person. Dickens has written of a successful borrower entertaining himself "with the reflection that his friend is a damned fool to have lent it him." Forster renders this innocuous by substituting "egregious" for "damned."

It is, perhaps, ungrateful to dwell on these trifling idiosyncrasies of a man to whom we owe so much. There is, however, one instance of misrepresentation which cannot be easily dismissed. The following entry will come with a familiar ring to most readers: "The idea of a story beginning in this—two people—boy and girl, or very young—going apart from one another, pledged to be married after many years—at the end of the book. The interest to arise out of the tracing of their separate ways, and the impossibility of telling what will be done with that impending Fate." The date of this note must have been prior to August 25th, 1862. This is settled by Forster himself. As I have explained, with the exception of the lists of names and titles, ideas were plainly entered in the order in which they presented themselves. The above entry appears on page 16, Three pages later, on page 19, we find: "Open a story by bringing two strongly contrasted places and two strongly contrasted sets of people into the connexion necessary for the story, by means of an electric message . . . etc." Forster reproduces this, and appends the note: "The date when this fancy first dropped into his Memoranda is fixed by the following passage in a letter to me of August 25th, 1862, '. . . I have an idea of opening a book . . . by bringing together two strongly contrasted places and two strongly contrasted sets of people, with which and with whom the story is to rest, through the agency of an electric message . . . etc.'" Now the earlier notion, about the two young people, is excluded—I might almost say forcibly excluded—from the chapter on the memoranda, but reproduced later, in the chapter on *Edwin Drood*, where it is quoted as foreshadowing the relations between Edwin and Rosa. This is in accordance with his practice; but here it is given, not as one of the memoranda, but as a letter written to Forster himself, and dated July, 1869. This, again, we should accept without hesitation if the terms of the letter and of the original

entry showed the same sort of variation as is found in the two versions of the electric message idea. But they do not. Here is the letter: " What should you think of the idea of a story beginning in this way? Two people, boy and girl, or very young, going apart from one another, pledged to be married after many years—at the end of the book. The interest to arise out of the tracing of their separate ways, and the impossibility of telling what will be done with that impending fate." With the exception of the necessary introductory phrase " What should you think of," and the editorial addition of " way " after " this," Forster's reputed letter of 1869 is a verbatim reproduction of the memorandum of 1862 or earlier. That Dickens should have phrased the idea in 1869 in the precise words he had used in 1862 is very hard to believe; it is even harder to suppose that he found it necessary to turn up the old entry and copy it verbatim. But Forster's reputation might even force us to accept one of these improbable alternatives if he had not made, and repeated, one patently false statement in order, it would seem, to dissuade us from consulting the original volume. He opens the chapter under discussion thus: " I find no allusion leading me to suppose, except in one very doubtful instance, that he had made addition to its entries, or been in the habit of resorting to them, after the date of *Our Mutual Friend*." Later on he assures us that " All will have been given that have particular interest or value, from this remarkable volume, when the thoughts and fancies I proceed to transcribe have been put before the reader." And at the end, after quoting the final entry, which introduces the name " Brobity," and commenting that the suggestion may have been meant for some incident in *Edwin Drood*, he goes on: " If so, it is the only passage in the volume which can be in any way connected with the piece of writing on which he was last engaged. Some names were taken for it from the lists, but there is otherwise nothing to recall *Edwin Drood*." (Actually, Sapsea is the only name taken from the lists. Kimber and Peartree are only to be found in the sketch *How Mr. Sapsea ceased to be a member of the Eight Club*.)

This could hardly be more comprehensive and definite. We are to understand that Dickens never used the book after 1865; that Forster has told us everything of interest that the book contains; and that, as for *Edwin Drood*, the only entry that could have the remotest connection with it is that reference to Mr. Brobity's snuff-box. Without these assurances every Droodist would have made a bee-line for the volume in search of a clue, and driven one of the harassed succession of private owners into placing it in a public reference library for the sake of peace. As it is, eighty years have been successfully passed without the trick being detected.

And the reason for this curious little piece of duplicity? I fancy it is not difficult to guess. J. W. T. Ley, in the introduction to his edition of the *Life*, defends Forster against certain criticisms, and makes him tell himself, in regard to his relations with Dickens: " From the days when he first became an author, there was nothing in his life in respect of which I was not his confidant." By and large, this was no doubt true; the fact is generally accepted; and

we may feel certain that it was the claim Forster would make for himself before posterity. But he was also known to be a very jealous friend, and the inevitable exceptions to this claim which proved the rule must have hit him particularly hard. Worst of all, most probably, was Dickens's notification, when *Drood* was being planned, that the idea of the story was " incommunicable." And, to pile Pelion upon Ossa, having delivered this blow, Dickens promptly died, so that the damage could never be repaired. His friend had denied him on his death-bed! The temptation to disguise the situation must have been overwhelming. Dickens's confidence was his biographer's authority. And the means were to hand. Honour forbade him to suppress the " incommunicable " letter; but the memorandum book provided him, in Dickens's own words, with one part of the plot; while for the rest, no doubt some of his questions had been answered, and intelligent reading of the novel would enable him to make a reasonable guess. As for the original of the questionable letter, it has disappeared; but in company with so many others that this attracts no notice.

There is some mystery about the fate of the originals of the letters included in the later portions of the *Life*. Walter Dexter, in his introduction to the Nonesuch *Letters*, says of these that they " were, we understand, pasted down on the manuscript which, we believe, no longer exists." These cautious phrases make it clear that he was not given that substantial explanation of their disappearance which, in the case of manuscripts of such importance, one might have expected to find available. It must be remembered that the copyright in these letters was not Forster's and that in so long and intimate a correspondence many private matters must have been touched upon, including no doubt Dickens's relations with Miss Ternan. During the long period when knowledge of this matter was successfully kept from the general public, the suppression of the Forster correspondence was probably a necessary precaution. It is permissible to hope, now that the purpose of secrecy can no longer be served, that they may yet emerge from some place of safe keeping.

THE PARADOX OF DICKENS

The speech made by Professor Edgar Johnson at the Boston Branch of the Dickens Fellowship (and incidentally at that of Philadelphia also), as presented in the September issue of *The Dickensian*, unfortunately contained a number of errors, due for the most part to the difficulties resultant upon the transcription of the tape-recording.

p. 152, line 34: for " movie depression cycle " read " manic depression cycle".

p. 153, line 39, for " intelligently enough " read " intelligibly enough."

p. 153, line 47, for " improved photography " read " infra-red photography".

p. 154, line 54, for " high spirited clams " read " high-spirited clowns".

p. 158, line 20, for " bring bloom to all the living waste-lands of the world " read " bring living bloom to all the waste-lands of the world".

THE RE-EXAMINATION OF *EDWIN DROOD*

By William W. Bleifuss
Westminster College, Fulton, Missouri.

(*Continued from Vol.* L, *page* 186)

III

With satisfactory explanations of the statements by Forster, Fildes, and others, and with so many reasons for believing that Edwin is alive, we can turn to the second major problem arising in the unfinished novel: Who is Dick Datchery?

That Dickens introduced Datchery after he had already completed one-third of the story suggests that he is not a new character but someone we have seen under other circumstances. W. Robertson Nicoll's statistics on Dickens's practice of introducing characters in his novels indicate that he rarely brought in after the first third of the book new characters who are important to the plot.[1] Also we see that Datchery's own words and interests disclose that he knows almost as much about the Drood mystery as the reader does.

Datchery is a fully portrayed character. The detailed description of his physical appearance and his distinctive and peculiar mannerisms remind us, however, of no one we have met before. One of his notable habits is that he likes shaking his shock of white hair; another is a speech mannerism, for he keeps referring to himself as a " single buffer " living idly on his means. Though many have tried to identify him through analysis of his vocabulary and use of the idiom, his colloquial speech is like no one else's in the book.

On his first day in Cloisterham, after securing his " quaintly inconvenient " and " cathedraly " lodgings, he spends his time seeing the town and meeting such characters as have a part in the story: Jasper, Mayor Sapsea, Durdles, and Deputy. Though it is obvious he wants to live close to Jasper's gatehouse, it also seems obvious that he does not know Cloisterham and has not met many of its citizens before. He acts as though he were following directions. Datchery knows how to elicit information from each person he meets and manages to direct the conversation as he wishes. When he is by himself, he still keeps his identity; he does nothing to suggest that he has another personality at extreme variance with the one he is assuming. This quality is very important, for Dickens's characterisation of such people as Mr. Grewgious, Helena and Neville Landless, Edwin, and Tartar has been thorough and detailed. Not one of these resembles Datchery. Proponents of the belief that one of the above five people is Datchery are able to find only tenuous bits of evidence to indicate that the " single buffer," either when alone or with someone else, does anything to reveal his identity.

I do not propose to give in detail all the reasons that have been mentioned by those who favor any of the above five as Datchery. Richard M. Baker in his recent book, *The Drood Murder Case*, presented detailed and satisfying reasons for dismissing Neville,

[1] *Op. cit.*, pp. 82-89.

Helena, Edwin, and Tartar as Datchery.[1] His own choice, Mr. Grewgious, however, is no more satisfactory than the others, largely because Mr. Grewgious in his manners is so different from Datchery. The lawyer is blunt, honest, direct, full of self-righteousness. He is incapable of hypocrisy or pretence. His " shambling walk," angular body, and methodical old-maidish manner do not suggest a man capable of assuming a disguise that would have to withstand the penetrating eyes of Jasper. Furthermore Datchery is in Cloisterham for an extended period of time; Mr. Grewgious could not so easily absent himself from his office in London.

Helena as Datchery is certainly a novel solution of the problem, but it is a solution that befits a Sherlock Holmes, not a Charles Dickens. It is inconceivable that Helena, if she were Datchery, would bury herself so completely in her disguise that she would lose every trait that is common to her sex. It is equally inconceivable that a young woman who has always lived in Ceylon should use a piece of white chalk to keep tally on a cupboard door. That Helena has often dressed as a man is an interesting and probably important bit of information, but Dickens may have introduced this in order to prepare for a scene in which she dresses as her brother, whom she resembles so closely.

For young Neville to assume the disguise of Datchery is psychologically improbable, for the Neville we see in Chapter XIX is not a person capable of acting the part. Also we are told that Neville stays in his room studying, presumably to avoid trouble with Jasper. If he were Datchery, then not only Helena, but also Tartar, Mr. Crisparkle, and Mr. Grewgious would know about it. This would lessen the dramatic power of what to Dickens is an important element in the novel. That Edwin is not Datchery is evident from the manner of the latter when he meets the old opium woman. Edwin on the day before Christmas met this same woman; six months later Datchery meets her, but there is nothing to suggest that this is not the first meeting between the two. We need to read only a portion of that scene in Chapter XXIII to see that it is not a disguised Edwin who is speaking to the woman.

To identify Tartar as Datchery is again to ask for something that is psychologically difficult to accept. Tartar smokes, is very neat and methodical; Datchery never smokes, and seems to enjoy the inconvenient room he has found near the gatehouse. As a sailor Tartar would not have asked Deputy to explain more fully the meaning of " Jacks," a word the boy uses when he tells about the men who frequent opium dens. Also Dickens is careful to describe the young naval man's appearance fully; the main physical feature is the white forehead which contrasts so markedly with the rest of his deeply tanned face. There is nothing in the description of Datchery to suggest that he is Tartar in disguise.

To assume that anyone of the above five characters is disguised as Datchery is to conclude that Dickens has no respect for psychological truth and dramatic consistency. It is to suppose that in this novel he is disregarding all the techniques of characterisation

[1] The best articles supporting the possible candidates to the honor of being Datchery include: G. F. Gadd, " Datchery the Enigma: The Case for Tartar," *The Dickensian*, II (January, 1906), 13-16; Walters, *op. cit.* [the case for Helena]: Nicoll, *op. cit.* [the case for Helena]; Proctor, *op. cit.* [the case for Edwin]; Baker, *op. cit.* [the case for Hiram Grewgious].

that he has used so ably in the past. Dickens's characters are not so vaguely conceived that they can be erased and created anew under a disguise. Some of them pretend to assume new personalities in order to mislead other characters, but Pecksniff, Uriah Heep, and Boffin, the notable examples, do not assume a mask that differs in more than one or two major points from their real selves. Therefore to accept Datchery as any of the five characters suggested is not only to make a psychologically improbable identification but also to ignore all the conventions and characteristic modes of expression that Dickens employs in delineating his people.

Dickens's timing of the introduction of Datchery (Chapter XVIII) lends support to the belief that the "single buffer" is not to be identified with Mr. Grewgious, Helena, Neville, or Tartar. We must remember that during the following three chapters we find that Helena, Mr. Crisparkle, and the lawyer are in London, apparently seeing each other often, working together to protect Neville and later Rosa from Jasper. Tartar does not hear about the Drood mystery and is not introduced to Rosa until Chapter XXI. The plans that the protectors of Neville and Rosa propose do not leave room for Datchery; he must be an outside force acting more or less independently except for his probable connection with Mr. Grewgious, whose manner and words suggest that he knows much more than he will admit. We can conjecture that the lawyer is referring to Datchery when he mentions to both Rosa and Mr. Crisparkle a special venture he has undertaken:

> "When one is in a difficulty or at a loss, one never knows in what direction a way out may chance to open. It is a business principle of mine, in such a case, not to close up any direction, but to keep an eye on every direction that may present itself. I could relate an anecdote in point, but that it would be premature." (Chapter XXI.)

Before the end of the novel we surely would have been told what his "anecdote" was; that it involves Datchery is more than likely.

Those who favor Mr. Grewgious, Helena, or Tartar as being the idle buffer in Cloisterham declare that the chapter (XVIII) which introduces Datchery was not supposed to be in the position it holds in the book, but was to come later, perhaps as Chapter XIX or even as late as Chapter XXII. Though Henry Jackson after his examination of the manuscript attempted to shift Chapter XVIII out of the place where Dickens wanted it, his arguments do not withstand scrutiny and evidently were offered in order to substantiate his belief that Helena is Datchery.[1] The wish to support Helena's candidacy is father to the deed.

Forster is blamed for the "error," though there is no reason to suppose that there is any error or that the chapter introducing Datchery is not in its proper place. The outline and notes that Dickens made for the novel show that at first he planned to have the chapter describing the fateful meeting between Jasper and Rosa as number XVIII and that the Datchery chapter was to be

[1] *About "Edwin Drood"* (Cambridge, Eng., 1911).

number XIX. The notes *also* show that Dickens changed his mind and reversed the two in order to meet the needs of his plot.[1]

The suggestion that Forster is responsible for the reversal is not tenable for another reason. Forster himself has told us that on May 7th, 1870, he with a group of friends heard Dickens read the fifth monthly number of *Edwin Drood*, the number containing the chapter introducing Datchery.[2] It is unthinkable that Dickens may have read the chapters in one order and that after his death Forster rearranged them. Others who heard the reading surely would have protested. Similarly we have no right to shift the chapters about in order to satisfy theories that would not otherwise be tenable. Dr. Watson would never have allowed Sherlock Holmes this privilege.

Obviously my pattern of discussion leads directly to Bazzard, Mr. Grewgious's law clerk, as the only person who could be Datchery. To accept Bazzard is the easiest way out, and therefore the most unsatisfactory to a Sherlock Droodian. Mr. Grewgious says in Chapter XX that Bazzard is " off duty . . . just at present." He tells Rosa (in a passage added as an after-thought by Dickens to the manuscript) that " it would be extremely difficult to replace Mr. Bazzard." Mr. Grewgious behaves so mysteriously that even Rosa notices it. Bazzard is, of course, the only person except Edwin who is free to be Datchery and is not forced at the same time to appear in his own person.

As the "angular clerk " of the angular Mr. Grewgious, Bazzard is treated deferentially and considerately by his kind employer, who recognises that his indispensable employee is mortified at being a clerk when he would prefer to be writing plays. With customary generosity, Mr. Grewgious respects Bazzard for his theatrical connections and feels that he is only being charitable in helping his clerk until he can become a literary success. The lawyer's philanthropy, of course, is in contrast with Mr. Honeythunder's. Recognising that charity is hard for the needy to accept, the lawyer defers to Bazzard's gloominess. The relationship between the two men though parallel in many ways to that between Jaggers and Mr. Wemmick in *Great Expectations* is different in that Mr. Grewgious knows that his clerk inhabits two worlds, the one being the law office and the other the theater. There is no suggestion that the two are not good friends—they often enjoy a Christmas goose together during the holidays. We know that Mr. Grewgious promised Bazzard's father that he would look after his son. Mr. Grewgious is not a fool, but like John Jarndyce, Jarvis Lorry, and the Cheeryble brothers, he is a wise, steady man who keeps " an eye on every direction that may present itself." That Bazzard would betray the lawyer, as some Droodians suggest, is improbable because of the embarrassing position Mr. Grewgious would then be in.

To consider Bazzard a villain is also difficult because it would mean that Dickens was reversing a psychological pattern that he set up for his readers at the introduction of the clerk in Chapter XI. Bazzard is not in the Dickens tradition of bad men and

[1] Nicoll, *op. cit.*, pp. 57-68.
[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 849.

traitors; he is rather in the tradition of Noggs, Wemmick, and even Wopsle. When we note Dickens's methods of introducing characters, we are able to distinguish without hesitation who is to be trusted and who is to be feared or despised. Bazzard is to be trusted. Shrewd Mr. Grewgious is not afraid to divulge before his clerk all his innermost feelings about the ring and Rosa's mother.

The clerk's reputation has suffered at the hands of Sherlock Droodians, for, as the most logical choice for being Datchery, he either has been ignored or termed an insignificant character. Vilified as a " surly sulky brute " by Montagu Saunders,[1] on the same evidence he was described by J. Cuming Walters as another Wopsle, a burlesque figure, " vain and opinionated." Neither man " could be heroic, neither could perform a hero's task."[2] W. Robertson Nicoll could discover in Bazzard no " ethical quality."[3] Others have been just as sure that the clerk would prove to be an accomplice of Jasper !

The careful attention Dickens gives to Bazzard is to arouse our interest in him. And then he is suddenly gone, " off duty . . . just at present," but of course he will reappear. The obvious answer is that he is Datchery, who would prove to be the " thorn of anxiety " to Jasper. Bazzard may not be a great enough dramatist to win a place on the London stage, but he is a great enough actor to play an important and difficult part in the snaring of Jasper. Though Dickens in *Nicholas Nickleby* stopped both to laugh at and to satirise the theater, he never created an unsympathic character who was connected with the profession. Wopsle, albeit a fool, is yet a friend in need to Pip; the circus people in *Hard Times* are showered with Dickensian good will. That Bazzard is as shrewd as his employer does not mean that he was to be a traitor, but rather that he was to be a clever assistant and the great actor Datchery, who misleads and disarms the people of Cloisterham.

The argument that Bazzard as a stranger to the town would not need to wear a disguise is groundless, for we have no right to assume that Jasper has not met him in Mr. Grewgious's office. Mr. Crisparkle would of course recognise the law clerk if he saw him without a disguise. Never having been in Cloisterham, so far as we know, Bazzard would have to rely on strangers for directions to Jasper's gatehouse. Having served as a law clerk for some time, he would be very familiar with legal terms; we would expect him to say, in words characteristic of Dickens himself, that Mayor Sapsea reminds him of the nature of the law, " Immoral." The wit that flows over the oblivious mayor is also typical of Bazzard.

Dickens in the earlier sections of the book has given enough attention to Bazzard to let us know that he is to have an important part in the story. Furthermore he is on the right side of the moral equation. However, he has not appeared enough in the story to make his mannerisms so striking that he would be inconceivable as Datchery. Dickens's sharp characterisation of the other candidates for filling the wig of the " idle buffer " makes it psychologically difficult to accept anyone of them as the " mysterious stranger." We can consider them as possibilities

[1] *The Mystery in the Drood Family* (Cambridge, Eng., 1914), p. 74.
[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 250.
[3] *Op. cit.*, p. 180.

only if we disregard everything that distinguishes Dickens's typical methods of characterisation.

Though it would be interesting to write a conclusion for the novel, to do so would only be a speculation tying together many guesses, a few probabilities, and several certainties. Two of the latter, I believe, are that Edwin was not murdered and that Bazzard is Datchery. We can expect that Jasper's habit of taking opium was to contribute to his downfall and collapse; his hallucinations and visions as well as his remarks to the opium woman suggest this probability. Perhaps he was to end his life in jail, as Forster suggested. Certainly there was to be some use of mesmerism, either by Jasper or by Helena. Maybe there was to be a duel of wills with the stronger Helena emerging the victor. Perhaps Neville was to die. Edwin would return in the last half of the novel to help expose his uncle. Whether Edwin or Mr. Crisparkle was to win Helena is impossible to guess; in any case we can be sure that Dickens intended that Rosa was to marry Tartar.

Probably the naval officer's proficiency at climbing was to prove useful on some midnight visit to the cathedral. Both Durdles and Deputy were to be important witnesses, we can be sure, against Jasper. Mayor Sapsea and Mr. Honeythunder were probably also to be revealed as frauds and "solemn donkeys," for the ripping away of masks is one of the major themes of the novel. The world of pretence and affectation was to fall, joining Mrs. Sapsea in her tomb. However, Dickens's novel, not the Ozymandian words of the mayor, is the true epitaph.

These suggested possibilities and others I have mentioned in my study can be arrived at openly and readily by anyone who inspects *Edwin Drood* in the light reflected from the other Dickens novels and observes how he handled his plots, characters, and themes; how he prepared for coming events; how he emphasised what was significant; and how he revealed his attitudes. *Edwin Drood* is stronger in plot and less concerned with moral problems and social criticism than many of the other novels, but it is typical of the mature Dickens.

Though we have examined in detail the various problems, the great mystery that remains insoluble is one Dickens knew nothing about, for what happened to Edwin in Cloisterham offers little difficulty in comparison with trying to understand why so many writers have invented unwarranted complications to fit their ingenious and *a priori* solutions. To explain this phenomenon is not a literary problem, fortunately, though it is, however, a suitable mystery for Sherlock Holmes. But we can leave him to his speculations, for the answers to the questions raised in *Edwin Drood* are in the other Dickens novels.

THE EDITOR IN AMERICA

The Editor recently concluded a three-month tour of N. America during which he had the opportunity of visiting many Branches of the Fellowship in Canada and the United States. An account of these visits will, it is hoped, appear in the next number.

DICKENS'S NOVELS AND MISS BURDETT-COUTTS

By K. J. Fielding

I

IT is often important when an author can be shown to have been influenced by his friends, and always interesting to show how this may have come about. But ever since the first selection of Dickens's letters to Miss Burdett-Coutts was published in 1931,[1] there has been a growing tendency to attribute to her a greater influence than she probably possessed. No doubt Dickens owed much to her in the way of friendship; but the various suggestions that have been made that she actually influenced the writing of the novels, need a much closer examination. It is clear that the social work in which they were associated occasionally influenced his fiction indirectly; but, with a few recognised exceptions, it is impossible to agree that her friendship directly affected his work. In spite of the way in which Dickens often incorporated real people and actual incidents into his imaginative world, his letters to Miss Coutts show surprisingly little relation between their activities and the novels.

It is difficult to be definite about such a question as this, but many of the statements that have been made are demonstrably wrong. Charles Osborne wrote that " a good deal of Dickens's literary work, including *Bleak House* and *The Chimes* was submitted to her judgment before publication,"[2] whereas not only is there nothing to show that she was ever invited to exercise her judgment, but she certainly never saw *The Chimes* until it was in print. In her recent biography, Mrs. C. B. Patterson echoes that there is " no doubt " that Dickens's " literary activity . . . must in a measure be attributed to Angela's help and influence "[3]; while the publishers of Professor Edgar Johnson's *Letters from Charles Dickens to Angela Burdett-Coutts*, have repeated that the new letters show that she and Dickens " debated " how he should conclude *Our Mutual Friend*, In fact. none of Dickens's letters to Miss Burdett Coutts even mentions the novel.

Most of the exceptions to the belief that Dickens was uninfluenced by Miss Coutts are fairly well known. *Martin Chuzzlewit* was dedicated to her largely because Mrs. Gamp was derived from descriptions Dickens was given of a nurse who had attended her companion, Mrs. Brown. The manuscript of *The Haunted Man* was presented to Miss Coutts probably because she took a particular interest in its rather painful progress, and may even have discussed it with him. The scene in the *Carol* in which the Ghost of the Christmas Present shows Scrooge two ragged children, almost certainly owes something to their joint interest in the Field Lane School. The story of Little Emily was probably affected by Dickens's concern with Miss Coutts's Home for Fallen Women.[4] And the way in which he expressed his outrage at the

[1] Charles C. Osborne, *Letters of Charles Dickens to the Baroness Burdett-Coutts* (London, 1931).
[2] " Friendship with Dickens," completed chapter in British Museum, Add. MSS., 46406.
[3] Clara Burdett Patterson, *Angela Burdett-Coutts and The Victorians*, London, 1953.
[4] Cf. Dickens to Miss Coutts, February 4th, 1850, Edgar Johnson, *Letters from C.D. to Angela B.-C.*, 1953.

Law in *Bleak House* may partly have been influenced by his indignation at her persecution by a fraudulent Irish barrister, Richard Dunn, who had just forced her to appear in court.[1] These are the main exceptions. Yet although it might be possible to add a number of remoter examples, it would be difficult to find any that were more directly connected with Miss Coutts.

The general supposition that there was some indirect association between the novels and their various schemes of social work is equally invalid. One might suppose that the immense amount of time that Dickens spent on organising and administering the Home would have yielded some reward to an observant novelist, anxious for new ideas, but the later novels show nothing of the kind. Emily's story is untypical, and Alice Marwood in *Dombey and Son* is stagey: even Nancy, in *Oliver Twist,* and Lilian in *The Chimes* (before the opening of the Home) had been more convincingly portrayed. It was not even that there was a lag between fresh experience and employing it in fiction, since Dickens's Memo-book of ideas for future novels (c. 1855-65) shows less observation than literary inventiveness. Indeed, at a time when he had almost unrivalled opportunities of learning the truth about such women, and when he was keenly interested in the causes of their behaviour, Dickens's memoranda still look as if they were derived from cheap French novels or adaptations for the stage.[2]

His difficulty was that, without recognising it himself, he had two sets of standards: one for fiction and one for everyday use. In both the story of Little Emily and the sketch of the woman of the streets in *Little Dorrit* (Chapter XIV) his intention was to show his readers how much good remained in such women, and how they ought not to be shunned by society but should be helped to "return to virtue."[3] But he was so conventional in writing of Emily that he could not avoid treating her finally as no more than a pattern penitent; and, similarly, in the scene in *Little Dorrit,* he was unable to resist the melodramatic effect of making the most of the very quality of strangeness he wanted to play down: "'You are kind and innocent,'" the woman says to Little Dorrit, "'but you can't look at me out of a child's eyes.' . . . And with a strange wild cry, she went away." From the first

[1] When Dunn made his final attempt to embarrass Miss Coutts, beginning in February 1853, Dickens wrote to her: "A more striking illustration of what I deliberately believe to be the only intelligible and constant principle of the English law the principle of making business for itself could scarcely be conceived." February 7th, 1853. And the next number of *Bleak House* (Chapter XXXIX) had: "The one great principle of the English law is to make business for itself. There is no other principle distinctly, certainly and consistently maintained through all its narrow turnings."

[2] There are only two entries:

"I am a common woman—fallen. Is it devilry in me—is it a wicked comfort—what is it—that induces me to be always tempting other women down, while I hate myself!"

"The prostitute who will not let one certain youth approach her. 'O let there be some one in the world, who having an inclination towards me has not gratified it, and has not known me in my degradation!' She almost loving him. Suppose, too, this touch in her could not be believed in by his mistress: by some handsome and proudly virtuous woman, always revolting from her."

John Forster, *Life,* Book IX, Chapter VII: more or less confirmed by microfilm of MS. in the Berg Collection, New York Public Library.

The first entry also possibly confirms the tentative impression that Dickens made some use of his experience of the women in the Home, in Miss Wade and Tattycoram in *Little Dorrit.* Miss Wade is described as "a woman who, from whatever cause, has a perverted delight in making a sister-woman as wretched as she is" (Chapter XVI); while Mr. Meagles rather complacently speaks of Tatty as "a girl who might be lost and ruined if she weren't among practical people." (Chapter XXVII).

[3] Dickens to W. F. De Cerjat, December 29th, 1849, *Letters,* ed. W. Dexter, 1938, II, 194.

Dickens had the same intention, to show that there was " a hope yet lingering behind; the last fair drop of water at the bottom of the dried-up weed-choked well "[1]; and to the end he would have held to his declaration that he was a realist: " It is useless to discuss whether the conduct and character of the girl seems natural or unnatural, probable or improbable, right or wrong. It is true."[2]

In a sense, however, Dickens may have been justified, since the more closely the novels are examined the clearer it seems that in spite of their contemporary relevance they have an independent consistency. It is surprising, for example, that although *Little Dorrit* was written soon after Dickens had been helping Miss Coutts in a scheme for the improvement of a slum district in Westminster in which they had found the landlords exasperatingly obstructive, there is no direct relation between fact and fiction. In spite, even, of the strong impression of moral disapproval to be derived from contrasting scenes in Bleeding Heart Yard and the patriarchal home of the landlord, Casby, it is never suggested that this is a typical situation. It is a mistake to interpret the novel as if it were a kind of *Widowers' Houses*. There is no attempt at an attack on the whole *rentier* system. The only direct outburst against contemporary housing conditions with the suggestion that they might be altered by legislation, is in the strong but brief paragraph against the Sunday Trading Bill.[3] Apart from this particular instance, the general significance of Dickens's correspondence with Miss Burdett Coutts, which might be illustrated from other examples, is largely that in the later novels his life and fiction remained disconcertingly mutually unassimilable.

II

As well as Miss Coutt's influence on the novels being exaggerated, the extent of her partnership with Dickens has also been overestimated. As far as can be seen their friendship began in 1839 and virtually ended in 1859. Yet Professor Johnson is genuinely of the opinion that it may have continued much longer; Osborne is uncertain; and Mrs. Patterson has even gone so far as to say that Dickens's death " must " have " left a deep void " in Miss Coutt's life, since " for thirty years they had both devoted the greater part of their powers and time, and Angela a great measure of her wealth, in endeavouring to ameliorate the condition of the unfortunate " (p. 177). This, however, is entirely unacceptable.

Most of the work they undertook together was in connection with the Home for Fallen Women, from 1847 to 1858, which was a relatively minor enterprise even though it took up much of Dickens's time.[4] Apart from this he was chiefly occupied in dealing with numerous individual cases needing help: a useful work, but entirely charitable rather than reformatory. He had nothing to do with the Whitelands scheme, except for correcting the English in Miss Coutt's booklet; they briefly collaborated in helping the Field Lane School; and he went to some trouble in

[1] Preface to the third edition of *Oliver Twist*, 1841.
[2] *Ibid.*
[3] Chapter III, second paragraph.
[4] Minor in relation to her great wealth and other benefactions: in eleven years it admitted just over a hundred women, and cost about £1,000 p.a.

helping her with her plans for the Westminster improvements and seeing that they were carried out. Apart from these undertakings, however, the only other important enterprise in which Dickens helped Miss Coutts, was in her plans for buying a derelict area in Bethnal Green on which to build workmen's flats.

Even this, however, has been greatly exaggerated, since it has not been understood that although Dickens carried out much of the preliminary work of arranging for surveys and plans, he had nothing to do with the actual construction of Columbia Buildings. For, in spite of Miss Coutts's caution, after having bought the land in 1852-3, it was found that all their plans were inoperative for seven years. The tenant of the site was a dust contractor, who occupied it with an enormous dust heap, and on application to the courts he was permitted the full period in which to find somewhere else to carry on his business. Nothing was done about the buildings, therefore, until 1859, when Dickens had already broken with Miss Coutts; it is never mentioned in his letters after 1854; the architect was changed; and there is nothing to show that Dickens had anything to do with the buildings as they were eventually opened in 1862.[1]

A further development of the same estate has also been attributed to Dickens, but again the assumption is entirely wrong. Once the flats were occupied, in 1862, Miss Coutts projected the extravagant enterprise of a retail fish and vegetable market for the whole East End of London.[2] But although there is no doubt that, under Dickens's guidance, the scheme would have been thoroughly investigated and tried at first on a limited scale; without his restraint, Miss Coutts had Columbia Market constructed on a site next the buildings at a cost of nearly £200,000 without benefiting a single person. Dickens had nothing to do with the project, which was entirely Miss Coutts's; and it failed because of her mismanagement.

The reasons for their association and the way in which it developed, require a much closer study; for although Dickens's letters show that she frequently charged him with being hasty and impetuous, the evidence of the schemes they each administered makes it clear that while he conducted her affairs with an almost bureaucratic caution, she was apt to act with all the caprice of a wealthy philanthropist. Indeed, without attempting to belittle either Miss Coutts's achievement, or the work on her

[1] This is in direct contradiction of everything that has been written about the matter before. The reason for the delay is given by George Godwin, *Builder*, February 12th, 1859; see also *Builder*, April 25th, 1857, reprinted with slight changes in Godwin's *Town Swamps and Social Bridges*, 1859, pp. 22-3. A long passage Mrs. Patterson has quoted about the East End of London as if it were by Dickens (p. 165), is *not* his, but from "Hail Columbia Square!" *AYR*, June 7th, 1862, which may have been by W. H. Wills. It has also usually been said that it was Dickens who first introduced Miss Coutts to the site in Bethnal Green. This may be so, but the story is legendary, while it is likely that she had known something of the district much earlier from the charitable interest taken in it by her step-grandmother, the Duchess of St. Albans. When Angela Burdett was living with the Duke and Duchess in 1831, moreover, the site of the Columbia estate was the scene of a notorious murder by body-snatchers; and enquiries showed that the wife of the leader of the gang who lived where the murders took place was then in receipt of a regular pension from the Duchess. —*Times*, December 6th, 1831, p. 3.

[2] See Francesca M. Wilson, "Ypres at Bethnal Green," *The Architectural Review*, London, November 1944, pp. 131-4. Dickens may, nevertheless, have mentioned the project to Miss Coutts in a letter he wrote her on the death of his son Walter: "I am beyond measure interested beforehand, by what you are to tell me. Pray write it as soon as you can. Do not suppose I am unfit to pursue it. I am at work, though in a rather dull slow way for the moment." February 12th, 1864, Edgar Johnson, *Letters*, p. 377. Miss Coutts does not appear to have consulted him, however, and the scheme is never mentioned in their correspondence again.

life which has already been completed, it must be recognised that much that has already been published is completely fanciful. A similar spirit is so strong in Dickens's biography that the combined legends need watchful resistance. They are both important enough to be taken seriously.

THE STAGE STORY OF *A TALE OF TWO CITIES*

By Malcolm Morley

WHEN Dickens, as it were, closed his account with *Household Words* and invested in *All the Year Round*, he felt that a serial from his pen would thoroughly establish the new publication. Accordingly, the initial number on April 30th, 1859, introduced *A Tale of Two Cities*, a tale to be continued weekly until the following November 26th. There was certainly theatrical matter in the serial, yet it was not immediately snapped up by the stage. Only after the story had run its full course did the first dramatisation appear, and that was one authorised by Dickens himself. The law of copyright, as involved than as any Rent Act of a later date, afforded small protection to novelists when, without permission, plays were made from their books. Dickens had suffered much from this injustice and, as a small measure of defence, adopted the method of granting approval to certain adaptations of his works. Whenever this was done such plays were regarded as being the official versions. All the same, other versions were made and performed in other theatres.

A Tale of Two Cities at the Lyceum Theatre on January 30th, 1860, was an adaptation by Tom Taylor, who might well be described as the reigning dramatist of the early 1860's. Dickens not only sanctioned his play but, to a great extent, supervised the production. At one time he had thought of playing Sydney Carton himself. In a letter to Mary Boyle, he admitted this with, possibly, Devonshire House theatricals in mind. At the Lyceum rehearsals, we may be sure, he had many suggestions to make to Fred Villiers, the actor cast for the part. The theatre had been leased by Madame Celeste, the Anglo-French actress, who, for fourteen years, had been in partnership with Benjamin Webster at the Adelphi. When that playhouse was rebuilt in 1858 there had been disagreements between them; professional jealousies resulting in the actress launching out for herself elsewhere. Webster remained at the Adelphi while Celeste migrated to the Lyceum. After a disappointing start with a poor play, *Paris and Pleasure*, by Charles Selby, she turned to Dickens and Tom Taylor.

Meanwhile Webster had produced in his theatre a drama dealing with the French Revolution. It was a piece he had held for three years, *The Dead Heart*, by Watts Phillips. The fact that Celeste intended putting on a version of *A Tale of Two Cities* may have induced Webster to anticipate the Lyceum and take the Phillips play from the shelf where it had rested so long. He and Celeste were no longer partners; they were rivals. *The Dead Heart* was

a highly successful production; Webster scored as the hero, Robert Landry, and J. L. Toole was in his best comic form as Toupet, a perruquier turned soldier. Mrs. Alfred Mellon played Catherine Duval, the anguished mother of a young aristocract sentenced to death. The climax of the drama is reached when the place of the son at the guillotine is taken by Landry. It was a similar situation to that in the Dickens's story where Sydney Carton sacrifices himself for another. Heated controversy raged in the press as to whether the ending in the novel had been inspired by *The Dead Heart*, or whether the novel had furnished material for the Adelphi play produced on November 10th, a date when the serial was reaching its end. Phillips was accused of taking from Dickens. Webster refuted the charge by announcing he had accepted and paid Phillips for his work years earlier; the dramatist himself stated *The Dead Heart* had long been known to Dickens who had, in fact, attended a reading of the piece given to a number of friends a short time after it was written. Argument blazed on the question in literary circles. Yet, after all, it could be no more than a coincidence that both writers had used the same subject. The theme of self-sacrifice common to the two works was neither the invention of Dickens nor of Phillips. It has served several authors before. Dumas the Elder in his drama, *Le Chevalier de la Maison Rouge*, produced in 1847, had the Revolution for a setting, and the closing scene showed the noble Lorin taking the place of the condemned Chevalier. An English version by Dion Boucicault of the play had been seen at the Adelphi in 1853 with, be it noted, Webster and Celeste in the principal parts. Earlier still, in 1842, there was Lord Lytton's novel of *Zanoni* where the hero in like fashion sacrifices himself to save somebody he loves. Five years before that Carlyle in his *French Revolution* had an account of a similar episode, an actual happening of those turbulent days. But nearer the occasion of the Lyceum premiere was *The Changed Heart*, by John Parselle, given at the Surrey the previous week. Adapted from the French of *La Comtesse de Noailles*, it was a dullish drama bearing a pronounced resemblance in plot to both *The Dead Heart* and Dickens's novel.

At the Lyceum *A Tale of Two Cities* was highly strung drama faithful, on the whole, to Dickens. Nevertheless, moments of tenseness followed each other with monotonous regularity. After the first performance the piece was greatly improved when a full hour had been cut from the playing time. The scenes were all laid in Paris, the final one coming as something of an anticlimax. The farewell speech of Sydney Carton as he goes to the guillotine had been spoken in the previous scene while the last showed the death of Madame Defarge, accidentally killed by a pistol as she struggles with her husband who is trying to prevent her from denouncing Charles Darney to the Tribunal. Celeste played the dying Therese Defarge, doubling the rôle with that of the sister Colette in the Prologue. Colette also died but not until she had delivered several long speeches, "full of fat" as the old professionals would say. Ernest Defarge was acted by James Johnstone, Dr. Manette by James Vining, and Mr. Lorry by Tom Lyon.

Lyon, no longer a leading man, might have been remembered for his performance in the past of Grandfather Trent at the Adelphi. The love interest of Charles Darney and Lucie Manette was shared between two capable players, Henry Forrester and Kate Saville.

A Tale of Two Cities was the one dramatisation of Dickens by Tom Taylor. He had a prolific pen which he mostly used on adaptations from the French. *The Ticket of Leave Man*, *Still Waters Run Deep*, and *The Fool's Revenge* were all his importations from across the Channel. Fledgling George Du Maurier, meeting him in his zenith, found him an irritating snob. Not every successful author unbends to youth. Taylor's dramatisation was to be given later in the year in Edinburgh, and revived occasionally in the outlying theatres of London. It was the first stage version of the story to reach New York, being played there at the New Bowery on April 3rd, 1860, with J. G. Hanley as Carton, George C. Boniface as Dr. Manette and Mrs W. G. Jones in the dual rôle of the sisters.

John Hollingshead in his autobiography makes reference to a collaboration between the actor, Charles Fechter, and Dickens, in a version of *A Tale of Two Cities*, which was acted at the Lyceum. He goes on to say:

> " This play gave birth to a piece of far too-previous criticism. An able but unfriendly critic—not in love with either Dickens or Fechter—prepared an analytical condemnation of the play and acting for a weekly journal, sent it in assuming that the performance took place as announced. It duly appeared; but the performance was unfortunately delayed for a week."

Something is wrong here. No play on the subject was seen at the Lyceum from the time of the Taylor version until the coming of Martin Harvey. If Dickens and Fechter did collaborate, their play was certainly not performed at the theatre, or anywhere else for that matter. In January, 1860, when Dickens was supervising this first dramatisation, Fechter had not begun his career on the English stage nor, indeed, made the acquaintance of the novelist. From January, 1863, until November, 1867, the actor was in management at the Lyceum and Dickens, it has been claimed, had a financial interest in the venture. He may have revised, or even rewritten, certain old melodramas for Fechter but never during that period was there any hint of an adaptation from the novel being staged. Hollingshead must have confused the plays or misremembered a theatrical event of the time. However, his story is a good one.

An authorised version, lurid and crude, *The Tale of Two Cities; or, The Incarcerated Victim of the Bastille*, was produced at the Victoria on July 7th, 1860. Again the scenes were all in Paris and, generally speaking, the piece followed the pattern of Tom Taylor. The ending differed. Madame Defarge is killed by a pistol, although her struggle, as in the book, is with Miss Pross. Sydney Carton, after changing places for the guillotine with Charles Darnay, escapes death by another exchange of clothes, this time with the spy Barsad whom he drugs and leaves behind

to be executed in his stead. How banal a finish to the drama. Well, a happy ending, if such it could be called, was wanted at the "Old Vic." W. H. Pitt appeared as Sydney Carton, W. Harmer as Dr. Manette, Jack Bradshaw as Solomon Barsad and Frances Harrison as Miss Pross. Following its predecessor, Therese Defarge and her betrayed sister of the Prologue were played by the same actress, in this case Mrs. E. F. Saville.

The text of the Vic version was assigned to F. Fox Cooper when the play was published by Dicks. Previously the same text had been issued by Davidson, and the adapter set down as Henry J. Rivers. This earlier printing presents a small puzzle. The recorded distribution of rôles in Davidson coincides with the cast at the Lyceum where the version was never performed, although the venerable George Daniel in a preface mentions it as being acted there. A picture of Celeste as Madame Defarge graces the edition together with the inscription: "as played at the Theatres Royal." No reference is made to Cooper, or the Vic. Rivers was a small part actor, a contentious individual with a habit of writing letters to *The Era*, the journal of the profession in those days, protesting about this or that, and demanding recognition for things he had done (or not done as was often found). His claim to be the adapter can be regarded as dubious, particularly in view of the false insinuations about the Lyceum and Celeste. It might be that Rivers did an amount of work on the script credited to Cooper. He could have been a subordinate collaborator or, perhaps, a play copyist. It is not a matter of great importance.

Not a direct dramatisation, *All for Her*, by J. Palgrave Simpson and Herman C. Merivale, at the Mirror Theatre on October 18th, 1875, owed much to the novel. On the programme the authors acknowledged that the character of Hugh Trevor played by John Clayton was derived from Sydney Carton. The chief incident in the play was also borrowed from the book though the period was altered from the French Revolution to the time of the Jacobite Rising in 1745. To save the life of his half-brother, Trevor replaces him on the scaffold. The piece did extremely well and transferred to the St. James's on the following January 8th. Seven years later it was revived at the Court still with John Clayton. *All for Her* was given in New York at Wallack's on January 22nd, 1877, with Lester Wallack in the lead and again in that city in December, 1902, at the Garden Theatre with E. S. Willard as Hugh Trevor. The rôle of the dissolute hero attracted actor-managers.

Touring the English provinces in the 1870's was the Virginia Blackwood Company with a repertory consisting alomost exclusively of Dickens adaptations by Murray Wood. The most popular subjects were *The Old Curiosity Shop*, *Barnaby Rudge* and *David Copperfield*, but at one time *A Tale of Two Cities* was included in their number. Spanning the years was the Compton Comedy Company, familiar for a quarter of a century throughout the British Isles. It was the organisation of Edward Compton, a stylised actor devoted to costume comedy, son of the Haymarket comedian, Henry Compton, and father of Sir Compton

Mackenzie, and that very good actress, Fay Compton. On January 2nd, 1893, he produced and played the title rôle in *Sydney Carton*, a drama in a prologue and three acts by T. Edgar Pemberton at the Theatre Royal, Norwich. For the next few years this adaptation was performed alternately with Sheridan, Goldsmith, and other classics, throughout the length and breadth of the country. Of special interest is the fact that Pemberton was the author of *Charles Dickens and the Stage*, the first work to deal with the novelist in relation to the theatre. He also dramatised Thackeray's *Henry Esmond* for Compton and wrote a number of thespian biographies in addition to serving as dramatic critic of the *Birmingham Daily Mail* for a score of years and, as an ardent Dickensian, giving illustrated lectures on the life and works of the novelist.

T. Edgar Pemberton

Under the title of *Seventeen Hundred and Ninety*, an adaptation in four acts by Henry Hunt had a brief innings at the Bath Saloon Theatre, Sheffield, beginning October 29th, 1894. On the question of provincial productions, it should be mentioned that *A True Story told in Two Cities*, by Elliot Gayler, played in Leicester in 1884 and the following year at Drury Lane where it was a complete failure, had nothing whatsoever to do with the novel although it has been listed as a dramatisation.

The inception of *The Only Way*, most successful of all plays taken from Dickens, may be traced back to the time when young Martin Harvey, " the boy Jack," as he was called, and his wife, Nina de Silva, were on tour with Irving in America. Harvey, chafing at his subsidiary rôles, was dreaming of the day when he could be his own manager and play parts of his own choosing. They were in St. Louis and Mrs. Harvey chanced to read *A Tale of Two Cities*. Immediately she saw her husband as Carton and urged him to study the novel. It gave them food for much thought and speculation. Together they planned a play from its pages and, back in England, gave the writing of it to two clergymen, Freeman Wills and Frederick Langbridge, authors of a one-act piece, *An Old Song* (*Rouget d'Isle*), in which Harvey had acted. The play took shape as the clerics, giving heed to the ideas of the actor and his wife, arranged the dialogue and situations of the four acts, not forgetting the inevitable prologue. More and more the drama became an obsession with Harvey. He spent all his spare moments with it, planning a production even though he

knew the chances of that production taking place were remote. Several years were to elapse before it became possible. He had an opportunity of renting the Lyceum, the very theatre where he had served his long apprenticeship as an actor under Henry Irving. Money was needed for the enterprise. Harvey had no capital for such a propitious opportunity. Luck, long waited, was with him when J. H. Leigh, Shakespearean reader, unexpectedly supplied the finance.

The Only Way was produced at the Lyceum on February 16th, 1899, and the occasion launched Martin-Harvey as one of the great actor-managers of his day. It was a drama, vital and moving, and his sensitive portrayal of Sydney Carton a creation of romance outstanding in the theatre. The piece was to be indelibly associated with his name, in the provinces, in America and Canada. What *Jo* was to Jennie Lee, so *The Only Way* was to Martin-Harvey. Included in the supporting cast that memorable first night at the Lyceum were Herbert Sleath as Charles Darnay, Holbrook Blinn as Ernest Defarge, Grace Warner as Lucie Manette and the veteran actress, Alice Marriott, a one-time Hamlet, as The Vengeance. Nina de Silva played Mimi, so the anonymous seamstress of the novel was called, and played the part during every one of the ten revivals in town, the last being at the Savoy Theatre, November 7th, 1930. For five more years the play was to remain prominently in the repertory toured by Sir John Martin-Harvey, as he had now become. At one time Sir John Gielgud planned the production of a drama on the subject only to abandon that protect in deference to Martin-Harvey who proposed to give yet another revival of the Wills-Langbridge play in London. But *The Only Way* had had its day, a day of thirty-six years, and the Gielgud version has only been heard on the amateur stage and on the air.

J. Martin-Harvey as Sydney Carton

In New York *The Only Way* was given at the Herald Square Theatre on September 16th, 1899, with Henry Miller, an actor-manager of note, as Carton and Margaret Anglin as Mimi. Playgoers approved and the piece transferred to the Garrick on October 16th achieving seventy-four performances in

all. The Harveys on an American tour, were also to give *The Only Way* at the same Herald Square Theatre, opening there on October 20th, 1902. Comparisons were naturally made between the two actors, Miller and Harvey, the honours going to Harvey. On the same side of the Atlantic *A Tale of Two Cities*, adapted by Mrs. T. Pocklington, was seen at the Margaret Eaton Theatre in Toronto during December, 1933.

The English Music Halls in their heyday at the turn of the century gave room for the subject in their Palaces, Empires and Hippodromes. Bransby Williams provided a Dramatic Sketch in four scenes, *A Noble Deed*, wherein he appeared as Sydney Carton at the Oxford Music Hall, November 6th, 1899. Three years previously he had included Carton among his Dickens impersonations.

Another sketch played on the Halls, and elsewhere, went from title to title. *Sydney Carton's Sacrifice*, by B. Soane-Roby at the Camberwell Palace on January 28th, 1907, with Edwin Bennett as Carton, became *All for Her* when given with music by Louis La Rondelle at the Palace Pier, Brighton, October 7th, 1909, with C. Hayden Coffin in the part. At the Metropolitan in the Edgware Road, again with Coffin on November 29th, 1909, it was *Sydney Carton*. Hayden Coffin was a famous star at Daly's in the musical comedy era of George Edwardes.

As long ago as 1871 a dramatisation by Greenleaf Appleton, *A Tale of Two Cities*, was published in New Jersey but seems never to have been acted in America or Britain, unless very obscurely. J. Cooper Sands and Wilford F. Field have each issued scenes from the novel which they have arranged for performance. A French adaptation of the story was *Le Jour de Gloire* by André Bisson and Meg Villiers, produced at the Theatre National de l'Odéon, Paris, on December 23rd, 1936. Sydney Carton was played by Jose Squinquel and Dr. Maigret, as Dr. Manette was called, by Chamarat. A Dutch drama, *Londen en Parys*, given in Holland with Jan Musch in the rôle of Carton, was a translation of *The Only Way*.

The Dickens Fellowship

LONDON MEETINGS

Dec. Fri. 3rd. "A Forgotten Book." Mr. Dennis Birch. Swedenborg Hall, 7 p.m.

Mon., 13th. A Musical Christmas Evening. Tickets 5*s*. Swedenborg Hall, at 7 p.m.

Jan. Fri., 7th. "The Critics" and *The Dickensian*. Lincolns Inn Old Hall. See p. 1.

Wed., 26th. Visit to *Punch* office. Details from Dickens House.

Mon. 31st. Whist Drive. Details from Dickens House.

Feb. Mon. 7th. Birthday Dinner, Café Royal. Speaker: Mr. Charles Chaplin. Tickets, 27*s*. 6*d*., bookable on receipt of non-returnable deposit of 7*s*. 6*d*.

Fri. 25th. "Walter Savage Landor." Mr. Malcom Elwin. Swedenborg Hall, 7 p.m.

FOR THE DICKENSIAN'S BOOKSHELF

ALL RIGHT ON THE NIGHT

Mr. Clinton-Baddeley has done handsomely a job[1] which should earn him the gratitude of students of theatrical history. He has selected a period of roughly a hundred years—long enough past to be beyond the reach of living memory, but recent enough to be well documented in contemporary memoirs—and he has reconstructed for us a vivid picture of its theatre manners and customs. His period is in effect that of the four Georges though, as tradition dies hard, it overflows through William's reign into the sixth year of Queen Victoria.

With many of his facts we shall have a vague acquaintance but few of us, I imagine, will have realised fully the effect which the general unmannerly lack of discipline prevailing among audiences must have had upon theatrical entertainment in those days. What, for instance, would my friend Mr. W. A. Darlington, a staunch champion of the audience's contribution to the living theatre, say if his first night's attention to a new play was distracted by applause after every line uttered by a popular actor; by uninterrupted conversation all about him; by an occasional decision from the front of the house that the performance shall stop half-way through the programme; or by an acrobatic performance from a fellow spectator, clambering over a succession of box-partitions in order to visit and greet his brother "in a tumult of joy"? These accompaniments to the drama were, we learn, commonplaces in Georgian days; and that the account is free from exaggeration is shown by the fact that the amateur acrobat in question was, on his own confession, no less a person than William Macready, an actor-manager of the highest repute bent on reforming the theatre. He had the grace, when reporting the episode, to admit that it was "somewhat indecorous" and "attracted more observation than I desired", but though concerned about his own possible loss of dignity, it does not seem to have occurred to him that he was unduly upsetting either actors or audience. One cannot help wondering what sort of acting it was that emerged under this treatment. Our critics to-day have no hesitation in holding up David Garrick, whom they never saw, as one of the greatest actors who have ever graced our stage, but the verdict seems to need qualification if he was unable to command the undivided attention of his audience. Mr. Clinton-Baddeley traces the origin of a number of clichés which have survived in theatrical parlance, but there is one which is significantly missing from his list: "You could have heard a pin drop!" Can it be that this was an impossible comment before Irving's day? One is inclined to guess that acting reputations were largely based upon the execution of well-known "purple passages" for which audiences waited, and to which they were willing to attend.

If this was the state of affairs in the West End of London, what about the provinces? Dickensians will not be surprised to learn

[1] *All Right On The Night*, by V. C. Clinton-Baddeley. Putnam, 21*s*.

that the picture we have of Mr. Vincent Crummles and his company is little, if at all, overdrawn. Mr. Clinton-Baddeley devotes a chapter to this episode in Nicholas Nickleby's career and supplies parallels from contemporary records for almost every extravagance that Dickens introduces. Even that romantic occasion when Mr. Crummles first set eyes on his future spouse, standing "upon her head on the butt end of a spear, surrounded with blazing fireworks" is found to be entirely credible. The immediate success of Nicholas himself, without a vestige of training for the profession and with the minimum of rehearsal, was, it seems, so characteristic of the time that managers positively welcomed the amateur performer as guaranteeing at least a profitable novelty. Infant phenomena were the rule rather than the exception, and the talented family of ponies quite a matter of course in a theatre which provided several types of entertainment in a single bill.

A small point on which I am curious is not taken up by Mr. Baddeley. Mr. Lenville explains Crummles's nickname, "old bricks and mortar", as due to his style of acting being "rather in the heavy and ponderous way". Now "bricks and mortar men" have survived in the theatre to this day, but the term refers not to their style of acting but to the fact that they own theatre property. Crummles, of course, did not. He was a travelling manager who played in other people's theatres. I suspect that Dickens had overheard the phrase applied to a manager and made a guess at its origin which for once was wrong. But in general he is shown to have kept amazingly close to the facts.

Mr. Clinton-Baddeley ranges wide over the Georgian theatre. He introduces us to Aaron Hill, who developed the science of "clap-traps"; he shows how the ladies, once admitted onto the stage, won early emancipation from their skirts in the "breeches-part", advancing by way of the pantomime principal boy, who is still with us, to the frank display of the modern "leg-show"; and he traces the career of the national anthem from its start as a popular patriotic song, which could be introduced as a sure winner to retrieve many a failing situation, until it became the present *sine qua non* of all public entertainment and, one imagines, the severest test of mental stamina to which royalty are to-day subjected.

Dickensians and theatre-fanciers alike will find abundant entertainment in this book.

FELIX AYLMER.

BRANSBY WILLIAMS

MEMBERS of the Dickens Fellowship, who in their younger days were Music Hall enthusiasts, will find many fascinating reminders of their past enjoyment in the long list of famous names recalled by our Vice-President, Mr. Bransby Williams, in his second Autobiography.[1]

Mr. Williams, having written his first life-story forty-five years ago, now, at the age of eighty-four, has almost another lifetime of

[1] *Bransby Williams*, by himself. Hutchinson, 15*s*.

reminiscences to recount, culminating with his latest triumphs on Television. Perhaps the younger generation will find too much taken for granted in this book. Names of artists, whose mere mention brings back such happy memories to older people, will be but names to them.

Dickensians may be disappointed that he has so little to say about his many interpretations of characters from Dickens. In his earlier book, *An Actor's Story*, which he says he had the "youthful audacity to write," he had much to say about these characters and the different receptions accorded to them in various parts of the country. It was interesting to learn, for example, that Mantalini was a failure; that Squeers was successful, but never brought applause at the end; that Sikes was popular as a "make-up," but not as a character; that Tigg delighted audiences in some towns, but in others never raised a smile.

Many of the real personalities recalled in this book seem to be far less real than those fictitious characters, associated always with the name of Bransby Williams, and again the modern celebrities introduced by the author are at the best but pale forms, against the robust ghosts of the old Music Hall.

Eighty-four years and nearly sixty of those as a star—no wonder he has so many memories and can bring to his second life-story the fascinating glamour of the footlights, with all its excitements and disappointments.

This is a book to dip into by the fireside, conjuring up its ever fascinating pictures—a young artist, enthusiastically singing three songs, giving a stump speech and drawing cartoons for the staggering fee of 2/-; the same artist, not so many years later, a star in his own right, bringing to the raucous Music Hall a breath of the more staid "legitimate," with his ever-to-be-remembered sketches from Dickens; the great Irving in "The Bells"; Dan Leno at the height of his fame; the young artist, now a veteran—a star of the most modern contraption of the entertainment world—the Television screen.

JOHN GREAVES.

THE BEDSIDE DICKENS

This latest Dickens Anthology[1] emphasises a point, well known to enthusiastic readers of Dickens, but perhaps not so readily recognised by those whose acquaintance with his works is more superficial. It brings home to its reader the vast amount of "untapped" material there still remains in the books, letters and speeches of Dickens.

Excellent though Mr. Garrod's selection is, it is only very occasionally that it overlaps the choice of favourite excerpts by Mr. R. J. Cruikshank, in his equally excellent anthology—The Humour of Dickens, published in our Golden Jubilee Year.

The divisions in this latest anthology are interesting and quite intriguing at times, and the compiler has not hesitated to utilise extracts from lesser known writings, speeches and letters, in selecting apt passages, within the framework of his collection.

[1] *The Bedside Dickens.* An Anthology for Pleasure, compiled by J. W. Garrod. Published by Souvenir Press, 15*s*.

They comprise such headings as: A Christmas Garland; The Masculine point of view and the Feminine; Children's Corner; The Tender Passion; Shakespearean Idyll; The Happy Traveller; Britannia and her Sons; Pastimes and Pleasures, and London and Elsewhere.

Although the title page refers to Illustrations by Leo Vernon, these are really mere headings to the divisions of the Anthology, and whilst some of them are quite satisfying and retain the atmosphere and period, others leave much to be desired. It seems a pity, for example, that Paul Dombey on the Brighton Beach, who serves to introduce the Children's Corner, should have been given a head like a lemon on its side, with a receding chin, quite out of keeping with his character as given to us by Dickens.

These points, however, are unimportant in a very creditable collection. It is excellent for its purpose—to dip into and to lead, maybe, to a deeper study of the great source from which it springs. It should be also of great assistance to the would-be reciter, who not wishing to make adaptations himself or herself, will find much suitable material for a varied programme.

Its compiler has obviously expended much care and thought on its preparation and must be steeped in his subject. A most welcome present for the Dickens lover and definitely a book for the Dickens bookshelf, or better still, a permanent place on the table beside the bed.

JOHN GREAVES.

THE REVIEW OF ENGLISH STUDIES

Editor: JOHN BUTT, B.Litt., M.A.

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Subscription (for four consecutive numbers) 30*s.*, *post free*. Single numbers 8*s.* 6*d. net.*

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS
Amen House - London, E.C.4.

THE DICKENS FELLOWSHIP.

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31ST DECEMBER, 1953.

1952	LIABILITIES.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
£			
15	Sundry Creditors		17 5 1
—	*The Dickensian*—		
	Current Account	9 12 2	
	Add Loss for year	68 8 5	
			78 0 7
	Life Membership Fund—		
575	As at 31st December, 1952		574 17 6
833	Special Reserve		833 7 6
	Costume Department Fund—		
	Balance as at 31st December, 1952	180 18 2	
	Less Excess of Expenditure over Income for year	11 13 5	
181			169 4 9
11	Unexpired Balance of Receipts for Charitable Purposes		11 7 3
	General Purposes Fund—		
–	Sundry Income from Functions, Sale of Badges, &c., during year		34 8 5
	Income and Expenditure Account—		
	Balance at 31st December, 1952	929 11 3	
	Add Excess of Income over Expenditure for year	95 15 1	
		1025 6 4	
930	*Less* Loss on *The Dickensian*	68 8 5	
			956 17 11
			£2675 9 0

1952.	ASSETS.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
£			
575	Life Membership Fund Investment, at cost— £549 16*s.* 1*d.* 4% Consolidated Stock (Market Value 31st December, 1953, £514 1*s.* 6*d.*)		574 17 3
105	Investment of Special Donation, at cost— £118 5*s.* 10*d.* 4% Consolidated Stock (Market Value, 31st December, 1953, £110 12*s.* 0*d.*)		105 0 0
—	Investment £576 9*s.* 3*d.* British Gas 3½% Guaranteed Stock 1969/71 (Market Value 31st December, 1953 £559 3*s.* 0*d.*)		550 0 0
	Library, Pictures and Furniture (including items exhibited in The Dickens House Museum and Library)	30 4 0	
30	*Less* Depreciation	3 1 0	
			27 3 0
75	The Tyrrell Collection of Photographic Negatives, at cost		75 0 0
	Costume Department—		
	Costumes at Nominal Value	100 0 0	
	Cash in Hands of Assistant Secretary as at 31st December, 1953	69 4 9	
181			169 4 9
	The Dickens House—		
550	Loan Account	– – –	
20	Interest accrued	5 0 0	
424	Current Account	194 18 2	
			199 18 2
	The Dickensian—		
	Current Account	– –	
60	*Less* Loss for the year	– – –	
			– – –
5	Stock of Badges on hand		0 1 10
8	Amounts Paid in Advance		9 0 0
3	Estimated Income Tax Recoverable		– – –
	Balance at Bankers	961 17 10	
	Petty Cash in hand	3 6 2	
509			965 4 0
£2545			£2675 9 0

We have examined the above Balance Sheet with the books and vouchers of The Dickens Fellowship and certify the same to be in accordance therewith.
We have also verified the Investments.
3 York Street, Manchester 2.
22*nd April*, 1954.

(*Signed*) MORRIS, GREGORY & CO.,
Chartered Accountants,
Hon. Auditors.

THE DICKENS FELLOWSHIP

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER, 1953.

Dr. **Cr.**

1952.		EXPENDITURE.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
£	£			
	96	To Rent (including Insurance, Lighting and Heating) and Rates	99 19 0	
550		,, Assistant Secretary's Salary ...	£550 0 0	
275		*Less* Contribution by Dickens House	275 0 0	
—	275		275 0 0	
	50	,, Printing and Stationery	58 10 4	
	189	,, General Expenses and Postages	179 8 1	
	610		612 17 5	
221		*Less* Amount charged to *The Dickensian*	£221 19 4	
52		Amount charged to Costume Department ...	52 0 0	
—	273		273 19 4	
	337			338 18 1
	122	,, *The Dickensian* supplied to Headquarters' Members		127 8 2
	14	,, *The Dickensian* supplied to Branch Secretaries		14 0 1
	40	,, Meetings		20 10 6
	34	,, Advertising		— — —
	12	,, Contribution to Charitable Purposes Account		16 18 0
	3	,, Depreciation of Library Pictures and Furniture		3 1 0
	139	,, Balance being Excess of Income over Expenditure ...		95 15 1
	£701			£616 10 11

1952.		INCOME.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
£				
		By Subscriptions—		
548		Headquarters' Members	499 8 2	
86		Branches...	80 15 2	
12		,, Interest on Investment of Life Membership Fund, less tax	11 16 6	
				591 19 10
10		,, Interest on Loan to Dickens House		5 0 0
3		,, Refund of Income Tax		14 0 1
7		,, Surplus on Jubilee Account		
30		,, Functions		
5		,, Profit on Sale of Badges...		
—		,, Interest on Investment		5 11 0
£701				£616 10 11

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31st DECEMBER, 1953.

1952.	LIABILITIES.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
£	The Dickens Fellowship—		
550	Loan	—	
20	Interest accrued thereon	5 0 0	
		5 0 0	
424	Current Account	194 18 2	
			199 18 2
56	Sundry Creditors and Accrued Charges	.. ..	30 6 11
103	Adelaide H. Garland Memorial Gift	.. ..	102 19 9
10154	Walter Dexter Memorial Fund	.. ..	10257 10 3
	Balance—		
	As at 31st December, 1952	5710 5 5	
	Add Excess of Income over Expenditure for year to date	324 18 1	
5710			6035 3 6
£17017			£16625 18 7

1952.	ASSETS.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
£	Freehold Property—		
5108	Nos. 48 and 49 Doughty Street, at cost ..	.. ..	5108 5 2
	Furniture and Fittings, at cost, less depreciation at 31st December, 1952	194 10 6	
	Addition during year	4 9 9	
		199 0 3	
	Less Depreciation for Year	9 19 3	
195			189 1 0
	Library and Museum, at cost—		
	As at 31st December, 1952	222 12 5	
223	Additions during year	31 6 0	
			253 18 5
	Adelaide H. Garland Memorial Gift Investment—		
103	£188 5*s.* 9*d.* 2½% Consolidated Stock, at cost .. (Market Value 31st December, 1953, £121 8*s.* 11*d.*)	.. ..	102 19 9
	Walter Dexter Memorial Fund Investments—		
	£696 2*s.* 4*d.* 2½% Consolidated Stock ..	500 0 0	
	£1792 14*s.* 3½% Commonwealth of Australia Stock	2000 0 0	
	£530 8*s.* 3½% Conversion Stock	500 0 0	
	£1000 2½% Defence Bonds	1000 0 0	
	£488 18*s.* 4% Consolidated Stock	500 0 0	
	£486 16*s* 4*d.* British Electricity 3% Guaranteed Stock 1968/73	500 0 0	
	£527 13*s.* 4*d.* 3½% War Stock	500 0 0	
	£600 9*s.* 8*d.* British Gas 3% Guaranteed Stock 1990/95	500 0 0	
	£2363 11*s.* 4*d.* 3% Savings Bonds 1965/75 ..	2000 0 0	
	£820 7*s.* 7*d.* 3½% Treasury Stock 1977/80 ..	757 10 3	
	£1215 11*s.* 9*d.* British Transport 3%Gtd. Stock 1978/88	1000 0 0	
	(Market Value 31st December, 1953, £9253 9*s.* 4*d.*)	9757 10 3	
	Post Office Savings Bank Deposit Account ..	500 0 0	
10025			10257 10 3
28	Payments in Advance	.. ..	21 6 5
	Stock of Pictures, Post Cards, etc—		
166	Certified by Hon. Secretary	.. ..	229 14 5
86	*The Dickensian*—Current Account	.. ..	43 2 11
1083	Cash at Bank and in hand	.. ..	420 0 3
£17017			£16625 18 7

We have examined the above Balance Sheet with the books and vouchers of The Dickens House and certify it to be in accordance therewith. We have also verified the Investments.

3 York Street, Manchester 2.
22*nd April*, 1954.

MORRIS, GREGORY & CO.,
Chartered Accountants,
Hon. Auditors.

THE DICKENS HOUSE

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER, 1953.

1952.	EXPENDITURE	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
£	To General Expenses—		
29	Stationery and Postages	16 12 10	
42	Petty Cash and Sundry Expenses and Cleaning	50 12 11	
9	Telephone	8 2 11	
78	Caretaking Expenses	78 0 0	
275	Salary	275 0 0	
433		428 8 8	
35	,, General and Water Rates	10 16 0	
37	,, Insurances	37 4 11	
143	,, Lighting and Heating	141 6 1	
648		617 15 8	
15	*Less* Contribution from Dickens Fellowship	15 0 0	602 15 8
633			
10	,, Interest on Loan		5 0 0
100	,, Repairs to Building		188 9 0
6	,, Maintenance of Furniture and Fittings		6 2 11
10	,, Depreciation of Furniture and Fittings		9 19 3
301	,, Excess of Income over Expenditure carried to Balance Sheet ..		324 18 1
£1060			£1137 4 11

1952.	INCOME	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
£	By Annual Subscriptions received during the year—		
65	Friends of Dickens House		55 10 3
247	,, Admission Fees		206 6 0
—	,, Reproduction Fees...		1 1 0
—	,, Donation		15 1 10
	,, Rents—		
300	No. 49 Doughty Street	300 0 0	
35	*The Dickensian*	35 0 0	
50	The Dickens Fellowship	50 0 0	
			385 0 0
	,, Interest (Gross)—		
5	Adelaide H. Garland Memorial Gift Investment	4 14 0	
221	Walter Dexter Memorial Fund Investment	315 18 2	
			320 12 2
25	,, Grant from London County Council		25 0 0
112	,, Profit on Sales		128 13 8
£1060			£1137 4 11

For London Meetings see page 40

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